

**The Changing Roles and Status of Women in Cholistan,
Pakistan**



SUBMITTED BY

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Dedicated to

MY BELOVED MOTHER

NAFEES BEGUM

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Declaration

I hereby declare that contents of the dissertation “**The Changing Roles and Status of Women in Cholistan, Pakistan**” are product of my own research and no part has been copied from any published source (except the references, definitions and direct quotes from reports). I further declare that this work has not been submitted for award of any other diploma/degree.

Aisha Shoukat

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Abstract

Social change is a natural and constant phenomenon. It also modifies function of social institutions with passage of time. Cholistan, a desert of the south west Asia, is socially and economically backward area lacking basic amenities of life. Despite of its aloofness, it has witnessed change in socio-economic roles of women. The present study "The Changing Roles and Status of Women in Cholistan, Pakistan" was designed to investigate socio economic roles of women and assess the social change in their way of life for the last over four decades. For this purpose, ethno-methodology was employed selecting 50 elderly women through experience survey and purposive sampling method. Protracted qualitative interviews and participants' observation technique were used for data collection. Findings showed that women in Cholistan were playing significant role in functioning of social institutions such as marriage, family, religion, economy, education and health but neither visible nor counted. As a family member, they were performing multifaceted jobs but household decision making rested in the hands of men. Marriage decision making rested with the elderly men of the family and clan. Their role was expanding from household chores to livestock care and wage labourer. They were contributing in economic activities without becoming owner of wealth and property. Women were dependent on men for knowledge and practice of religion. Women were informally educating next generation about survival skills in Cholistan and now few were getting education themselves unlike forty years back. In case of health, still problems were faced by them and were mostly dependent on home based remedies, shrines, spiritual healing and holy saying. The major change for them was the introduction of the new reproductive health facilities to some extent but they could not avail them due to cultural impediments and conservatism. The study concluded

that women were living under miserable conditions due to non-recognition of their role and poor social status but rays of hope of their development also shine. With increased awareness, women were getting empowered in Cholistan as compared to past. The study suggested that availability of social services through social institutions can induce major changes in the lives of women in the Cholistan and this Pakistani experience can be a harbinger for other countries against the myth of desertification.

1. Chapter-I: Introduction

This chapter provides the logical foundations of the study. It contains basic concepts and causative factors of social change and how it affects the functioning of social institutions. Moreover, it presents an overview of the study area, rationale of the current research; scope and structure of the thesis.

1.1 Social Change: Concepts and Causes

Social change is understood as the transformation of cultural and social organizational structure with the passage of time. With increased globalization and glocalization of polity, culture and socio-economic characteristics, societies are no more static. Most of the societies are incessantly changing themselves irrespective of their present stage of development. Novel trends are joining the existing norms through new innovations and by the diffusion of other societies. Meanwhile at larger scale, invisible and sustained changes in the behavioural patterns result in social change.

Social Change is the alteration in the patterns of social organizations overtime¹. We can also understand social change as either the transformation of institutions and culture of a society² or in the basic structure and relationship of a social group or society, caused by factors including physical environment, culture, technology and population. Social change involves diverse ideas such as interaction, movement, growth and function. Moreover, when a large a number of persons is engaged in activities that differ from those in which they or their parents were engaged some time before, is termed as social change³.

Different social scientists view social change as a change in any social aspect of human collective life. For example, McIver and Page are of the opinion that “social change

¹Neil J Smelser, *Sociology*(New Jersey: Englewood Cliff, 1981).

² Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*, 4th ed.(Oxford: BlackWell Publisher, 2001).

³ Francis Ellsworth Merrill, *Society and Culture: An Introduction to Sociology*, 3rd ed.(Englewood Cliffs, NJ:Prentice-Hall, 1969).

refers to a process responses to many types of changes: to changes in the man-made conditions of life, to changes in the attitudes and beliefs of man, and to the changes that go beyond the human control to the biological and physical nature of things". But the current study base the research on the idea of Merrill who opines that social change is the change in which a group is involved in activities which markedly differ from those of their parents. The study will methodically explain this pint alter when we grapple with the changes ensued in Cholistan, the universe of this study.

Every change is not a social change. Each and every sort of variation, modification, or change in individual"s behaviour in society cannot be called a social change. To qualify for a social change, the change should be fairly lasting and it must set a trend, it should be reflected in social relations, behaviour, values and actions of a number of people in society. These changes should be in five fields or institutions namely change in social values, institutional change, change in distribution of possessions and rewards, change in personnel and finally change in the attitudes of personnel⁴. Social change is instigated and pushed by many factors. Some of the causative factors for social change and their impacts on any given society are as following⁵.

1.1.2 Geographical Factors

Process of social change is directly affected by physical feature of the area. The effects of physical features of the land on its inhabitants are believed to be a key determining factor in the way people lead and shape their lives. These effects can be traced in almost all aspects of human life but they are more visible in the way people are living for ages in a particular area. These topographical effects influence all spheres of life such as social roles,

⁴ Johnson M Harry, *Sociology: A Systematic Introduction*(New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, INC. , 1980).

⁵Prem Nath, Factor Responisble for Social Change: Aceesed from:
<http://cdenglish.blogspot.com/2010/02/factors-responsible-for-social-change.html> (Decmber 21, 2012)

economic activities, social organization, behaviours, dietary pattern, dress, intra community relations and nature of interaction among the people living there⁶.

1.1.3 Population

The size of the population of a nation or a group directly influences its social and cultural life. Wild growth in population is a serious threat to the established social order not only for a specific nation but also for the whole world generally. The standard of living of a family is considerably dependent upon the mouths to be fed in a family and a country, generally, follows the same trend. High standard of living facilitates easy mobility, breaks barriers of home and its tradition. In addition, it leads to an organized club life. It also means new attitudes towards the position and empowerment of women, birth control etc. Social change directly affects the basic social structure and social fabric of any society. Social change reshapes life of the individuals and groups in any society. Among the determinants of social change, most influential factor is technology; it has changed and redefined functioning of social institutions such as family, marriage and religion⁷.

1.2 Social Change and Social Institutions

Social change and social institutions are directly related and interlinked. "Institutions are social structures that have attained a high degree of resilience [and are] composed of cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulative elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life⁸".

Social institutions shape human life according to the cultural practices of the society. Institutions are man-made social structures that design and regulate human interaction in any

⁶D Martino et al., 2007.33.

⁷Hamadullah Kakepoto, "Sociological Impact of Social Change Upon Institution of Family with Special Focus on Pakistan.," (2001).

⁸W Richard Scott, *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas and Interests*(Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2008).p.48

society and making stuff of the social life⁹. Social change affects the functioning of social institutions and modifies it for fulfilling the emerging needs of members of the society. Social change directly influences functions of social institutions and basic structure of a society¹⁰. Besides, it is widely recognized that social institutions and their functioning is affected by the environment¹¹. In addition, social institutions serve as the vehicle for social change in a society and accommodate alternative social roles over the period of time for meeting emerging needs of individuals, groups and communities¹². Likewise, social institutions directly and indirectly affect the roles and activities carried out by women in any society¹³.

1.3 Social Change in Cholistan

Cholistan locally known as *Rohi* is a famous desert of the south west Asia situated in the territorial jurisdiction of Pakistan. It is an extension of the great dessert classified as Thar Desert. It is 30 km away from the city of Bahawalpur and extends into Thar Desert in its east and borders with the Bikaner and Jaisalmer districts of state of Rajasthan, India in south¹⁴. In its north and west, there is river Sutlej and its south western part is bounded by Thar Desert of Sindh region. It is placed between latitudes 27 42' and 29 North and longitudes 65 57' 30" and 72 52' 30" east bounded by Bahawalpur division with a population of about 0.155

⁹Hodgson Geoffrey M, "What Are Institutions?," *Journal of Economic Issues* XL No. 1 (2006).2.

¹⁰Kakepoto, "Sociological Impact of Social Change Upon Institution of Family with Special Focus on Pakistan.."

¹¹W Richard Scott, "Reflections: The Past and Future of Research on Institutions and Institutional Change," *Journal of change management* 10, no. 1 (2010).2.

¹²Theodore Powers, "Institutions and Social Change: A Case Study of the South African National United Nations Organization" in *Education For All Development Index*:(UNESCO, Islamabd, 2103).

¹³Johannes P Jütting and Christian Morrisson, "Changing Social Institutions to Improve the Status of Women in Developing Countries," *Available at SSRN 871445* (2005).7.

¹⁴M Rafique Mughal, "The Harappan Nomads of Cholistan'," *Living Traditions, Studies in the Ethnoarchaeology of South Asia* (1994). 4.

million¹⁵. Archaeological studies suggest that this area was once a fertile region irrigated by rivers like Satluj and its subsidiaries. It has no independent administrative structure like district or *tehsil* but it always being mentioned as part of three districts of Bahawalpur Division^{16, 17}. Bahawalpur division adjoins five districts of the Punjab province, Sukhar district of Sindh province of Pakistan and the former Rajhistani state of Bikaner and Jaisalmer, now Indian Rajhistan, and comprises a long strip of territory, 320 miles in length, with an average width of 50 miles running from north-west to north east.¹⁸

As discussed earlier, Cholistan desert is situated in southern part of Punjab, Pakistan. The total area of Pakistan is 79.6 million ha, of which 70% is arid to semi-arid. About 50.88 million ha (or 63.9%) are rangelands. The ecologies of Khabar Pakhtoonkhawah and Northern Areas are semi-arid to humid. The Sindh province is primarily arid while Punjab and Balochistan have arid-semiarid ratios as 58:29 and 43:57, respectively. By ecologies, 51.5% of total country area is arid, 36.9% is semi-arid, 5.4% is sub-humid and 6.2% is mixed. About 41 million ha is solely arid including about 11 million ha comprising deserts where mostly the climate is hyper-arid¹⁹.

There are five deserts in Pakistan of which Thar (Sindh) is the largest one with an area of more than 200,000 sq. km., it is world's seventeenth largest desert. It lies mostly in the Indian state of Rajasthan, and extends into the southern portion of Haryana and Punjab states and into northern Gujarat state. In Pakistan, the desert covers eastern Sindh province and the south eastern portion of Pakistan's Punjab province. The Cholistan Desert adjoins the Thar

¹⁵M.Akram and W.A.Khan, "Desertification Status in the Cholistan Desert," *Proceedings of the sixth all Pakistan Geographical Conference 1993* (Islamia University Bahawalpur Department of geography. Conference Proceedings (1995).p. 14.

¹⁶Mohammad Rafique Mughal, *Ancient Cholistan: Archaeology and Architecture*(Ferozsons Lahore, 1997). 23.

¹⁷FAO, "Pakistan, Cholistan Area Development Project,"(Rome, Italy1993).

¹⁸ Nurul Zaman Ahmad Auj, *Legacy of Cholistan*(Caravan Book Centre, 1995).11.

¹⁹Farooq, U., Ahmad, M., & Saeed, I. Livestock Productivity in the Desert Ecologies of Pakistan: Setting the Development Priorities.

Desert spreading into Pakistani Punjab province. Second largest desert is Cholistan (Punjab). Third comes Thal (Punjab) desert which is vast area mainly between the Jhelum and Sindh rivers near the Pothohar Plateau. Its total length from north to south is 190 miles, and its maximum breadth is 70 miles while minimum breadth is 20 miles. This region is divided into the districts of Bhakkar, Khushab, Mianwali, Jhang, Layyah, and Muzaffargarh. Its part in Jhang is on the left bank bank of the river Jehlum. Fourth desert of Pakistan is Indus Valley Desert (Punjab), the Indus Valley Desert is a desert eco-region of northern Pakistan. The Indus Valley desert covers an area of 19,500 square kilometres (7,500 square miles) in north western Punjab Province, lying between the Chenab and Indus rivers. The Indus Valley Desert is drier and less hospitable than the North western thorn scrub forests that surround it²⁰. Fifth largest desert in Pakistan is The Kharan Desert which is situated in the western regions of Baluchistan Province and very barren terrain. However Kharan desert can be separated from the rest of the arid landscape due to its sandy nature and more even terrain, ranging from 1000 meter in the north east to 500 meters in the west. It mostly falls in the Kharan District covering an estimated area of more than 20,000 Square KM²¹.

The desert of Cholistan, focus of this study, is seriously ignored due to its hard access, scorching heat, and cruel weather conditions. People are leading their lives in barren desert²² and they are having uniqueness in ways of spending their lives. In spite of its bareness, life prevails there but its nature is not well identified to the world. The most important aspects are hidden like the life of the women in Cholistan is being perceived from outside but not being studied.

In the Cholistan where in life is not too much progressive but with span of time, planned and unplanned factors of change also affected this piece of land. With passage of

20 <http://csspoint.yolasite.com/resources/THE%20DESERTS%20OF%20PAKISTAN.pdf>

21 <http://pakistangeographic.com/deserts.html>

22 M. Hameed et al., "Medicinal Flora of the Cholistan Desert: A Review."39.

time, this area has witnessed some socio economic changes due to developmental initiatives of government, non-governmental organizations (henceforth NGOs) and technological intervention. Among the government efforts, the most notable initiative is the establishment of Cholistan Development Authority (hereafter CDA) for bringing social and economic change in the area. CDA has accelerated the process of social change through various developmental projects such as establishing literacy centers in some areas of Cholistan, provision of water supply, construction of roads, bridges, health facilities and sheds for livestock.

Women in Cholistan are poverty stricken as still majority of the population in Cholistan is facing scarcity of resources in all spheres of life²³. There is a dearth of literature on women of Cholistan that can provide scientific grounds and base for their development. Study of the past and present life of women of Cholistan will enable to become acquainted with the actual condition of women of Cholistan.

As discussed earlier, Cholistan is a desert area and hardly accessible for outsiders. With the passage of time, social change in various aspects of human life has been observed here; augmenting the fact that no society can be static. Therefore, it is pertinent to say that social change has happened everywhere and it has reshaped all aspects of socio-economic life around the globe²⁴. Socio-economic changes are also taking place in Cholistan due to changing patterns of using desert land for cultivation instead of grazing²⁵. Cholistan desert

²³I.S. Chaudhary, "An Empeirical Analysis of the Determinants of Rural Poverty in Pakistan: A Case Study of Bahawalpur District with Special Reference to Cholistan," (2003).

²⁴H. Kakepoto, & Brohi, A. A. , "Problems in Sociological and Social Science Research: A Case of Developing Countries with Special Focus on Pakistan," *Asia Pacific* (2013).12

²⁵Samia Khalid and Aftab Hussain Gilani, "Distinctive Cultural and Geographical Legacy of Bahawalpur," *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies* 2, no. 2 (2009).13.

²⁵A. Raziq, K. de Verdier, and M. Younas, "Rapid Change of Strategy Is Necessary for Development of Dromedary Camel Pastoralism in the Cholistan Desert of Pakistan," *Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice* 1, no. 1 (2011).9.

has witnessed economic and ecological changes over the passage of time²⁶. Environmental changes in Cholistan have triggered changes in economic activities of people in Cholistan²⁷. Similarly increasing level of literacy and education has caused social change in the Cholistan²⁸. Pace of socio-economic change in Cholistan is prompted after the establishment of CDA in 1976. Through CDA, a number of developmental projects have been completed and many more are under progress including the provision of water supply, construction of roads, sheds for animal fodder and water and milk collection centres etc. These developmental efforts have changed the life of inhabitants both men and women of Cholistan.

All the above discussed developmental initiatives have induced social change in the lives of the women in Cholistan. Social change directly affects the functions of social institutions that adopt change in trends and practices and transfer it to the next generation. Social change that occurred in Cholistan revolves around social institutions such as family, marriage, religion, education, economy and health. Traditional social institutions are shaping socio-economic and political life in Cholistan²⁹. Here is brief introduction of social institutions in Cholistan.

1.4 Family

Family is one of the oldest institutions and forms basic unit of a society. It is defined as “a family consists of two or more people who consider themselves related by blood, marriage, or adoption. A household, in contrast, consists of people who occupy the same housing unit of the house apartment or other living quarter”³⁰.

²⁶Mariam Abbas Soharwardi Arshad, Muhammad and Jamal Abdul Nasir, "Comparison of Income and Expenditures of Nomads Pastoralists in Irrigated Areas and Desert Areas of Cholistan under Varying Environmental Conditions," *Statistical Sciences* 17(2009). 2.

²⁷Ibid. p.2

²⁸Khalid and Gilani, "Distinctive Cultural and Geographical Legacy of Bahawalpur."13.

²⁹Iqbal Muhammad and Ahmad Munir Farooq Umar, "Livestock Farming in Cholistan Desert of Pakistan: Setting the Development Strategies," *Annals of Arid Zone* 46, no. 1 (2007).1.

³⁰Ibid p.45

Family as an institution is considered most important in Cholistan as it protects its members in the volatile environment of the area. The functions of the family as a social institution have become manifold in the absence of other institutional services. In Cholistan, mutual bond between members of family are well established and all the needs and requirements of the individual members are fulfilled within the available resources. All the family members live together under extended family system and support each other through thick and thin.

1.5 Marriage

Marriage is another important social institution in a society. It is defined as “marriage is a culturally sanctioned union between two or more people that establishes certain rights and obligations between the people, between them and their children, between them and their in-laws”³¹. In Cholistan, marriage as social institution has got significance in the wake of performing various functions. Cholistan being a desert area has its distinct cultural features which are exhibited at varied social events like marriage and birth of a baby.

1.6 Religion

Religion as an institution plays spiritual, religious as well as social roles and maintains the social control. It is defined as “religious institutions are society’s important systems of religious beliefs and practices which are standardized, formulated and are widely shared and used as necessary and true”³². In Cholistan, religion as social institution deeply affects the lives of the people. It plays significant role in the social life of people by directing interaction and social relationships among them.

1.7 Education

Education as an institution has pivotal role in building the society. It is defined

³¹Harald E. L. Prins William A.Haviland, Dana Walrath, Bunny McBride, *Cultural Anthropology: The Human Challenges*, 11th ed.(New Zealand: Thomson Learning, 2005).487

³²Paul B. Horton, and Chester L. Hunt, "Text Book of Sociology a Chapter on Marriage,"(1984).265.

“education is a cultural universal found throughout the world, although in varied form but transmission of knowledge and bestowed of status are manifest function of education. Among the latent functions are transmitting culture, promoting social and political integration, maintaining social control, and serving as agent of social change”³³. In Cholistan there is very poor literacy rate especially among women. As it is the desert area, therefore, neither there are formal educational institutions, nor are enough resources at the disposal of Cholistanis to send their children to educational institutions in settled areas. But yet life and survival skills are being transferred from one generation to another one. To be literate and educated is by female seems a distance dream when male are also not sent to educational institutions. Generally in a nomadic society, imparting education to the female is not considered good.

1.8 Health

In the Cholistan, there is no concept of qualified doctor. One can hardly find a qualified doctor in case of ailment and the same situation goes with the availability of lady doctors. The people living in Cholistan have poor believe in formal treatment mode, so instead of going for proper medication, they prefer to home-based remedies in case of health problems. Furthermore, during pregnancy and delivery of baby, need of proper medical treatment is mostly ignored. Resident of Cholistan have more chances to become a victim of diseases as they drink water from *toba* which remains open for the entire external elements like micro-organism and dust etc.

1.9 Economy

The economic institution means the system of social roles and norms organized about the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. The function of economic institution is to fulfil the material needs and demands of the members of the society ranging from the basic needs of survival to goods intended “designed for conspicuous

³³Richard Schaefer, *Sociology*, 12th ed.(New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010).374.

consumption”³⁴. The topographic, geographical and phyto-geographical conditions of the area make it misfit for any viable economic activity. That is why, traditionally people in Cholistan are nomads and animal husbandry is their main economic activity³⁵.

1.10 Social Change and Status of Women in Cholistan

The study not only explores the impacts of the induced social change in the roles of women in social institutions in Cholistan. It also portrays social status of women as both the role and status can be called as the two faces of the same coin which cannot be separated.

Life of women in Cholistan has similarities with that of rural women of Pakistan who have low educational, health, economic and poor social condition in all walks of life³⁶. Although many studies have been conducted about the flora and fauna of Cholistan but the literature is scarce over women and their social life. Women of Cholistan have mostly been discussed in context of their colourful dress and beauty which has nothing to do with their socio economic development. Though, Cholistan is a remote area which is lagging behind from modern developed world i-e deprived of modern life facilities but it cannot be claimed that life is static there. In addition, it is compulsory that understanding of the actual condition of Cholistan cannot be developed merely by studying their current situation. For exploration of their life phenomenon, it is indispensable to inquire about their past along with their present situation and resultantly, exploration of the consequences and effects of social change.

Life in Cholistan dessert is always simple and limited to few routine activities. Material culture is light and people can move in search of food and fodder easily. Women have a significant role in the desert economy. With the occurrence of social change, role

³⁴Anwar Alam, *Social Anthropology: Comparative Social Institutions* (Peshawar: Awan Printers 2008).79.

³⁵F. Ahmad, "Agro-Pastoral Systems in Cholistan," *Pakistan Geographical Review* 60, no. 2 (2005).69.

³⁶Asad Ali Khan, Rasheed Muddasar & Sarwar Hina "Socio-Economic Profile of Cholistani People-a Geographic View," *Journal of SocialSciences and Humanities* 2, no. 1 (2004).

and status also change. With agriculture, people become sedentary having a complex material culture with a complex social organization. Cholistan is not an exception. Women in Cholistan have been traditionally engaged in livestock tending, care for the children, aged and cooking. The daily household chores start from milking the sheep, goat, cows and buffalos. It is followed by churning the curdled milk or whey making and separating butter from it and in processing it into *ghee* or butter oil. Furthermore, introduction of agriculture in Cholistan tends people to become sedentary with new values and norms. This shift from nomadism to sedentarization in certain parts of Cholistan has changed women's status and role as compared to the traditional desert life.

This study gives an ethnographic description of Cholistan where social life especially that of women is not fully known to the external world. The researcher endeavored to expose women's role in different social institutions along with customs and traditions so that social life of women of Cholistan can be explored in depth. It is widely recognized that social life revolves around social institutions such as family, marriage, economy, education, health and religion. The research examined the social change which has occurred in the women's life through these institutions by passing decades. The current study adopted ethnomethodology which is most suitable as it made the availability of the researcher more contributive in data collection. Apart from the utilization of this technique, for achieving the objectives of relevant information from field, other techniques that include observation, interviewing, documentary analysis and content analysis were fully utilized.

This study is qualitative research with focus on women of Cholistan as target population. Researcher aimed at getting comprehensive insight by welcoming all the available information from different officials and non-officials sources which could contribute in any sort of understanding about life of Cholistan.

For studying the change in status and roles of the women of Cholistan, fifty elderly women were studied in three clusters so that upshot of change and their effect on roles and status could be identified. Study depended upon experience survey and was conducted with consideration of social organization of the area. Population in Cholistan is mostly nomadic and found around sources of water or in comparatively newly developed villages. So for the current study, I took *tobas* and villages as geographical unit of the study. I collected data by protracted qualitative interview and as participant observer through an overt nature of study and keeping community people in confidence. I have also participated in different ceremonies because all the issues were not of worth understanding merely by interviews.

In this study, the main feature of the women in the context of Cholistan, their contribution in socio-economic life and change occurred during the last forty years, has been investigated. An effort has been made for explanation of the social and economic setup of life of women of Cholistan and how change occurred and affected the socio-economic condition of women.

Women in Cholistan extensively use golden and silver ornaments and this is the main saving method of the families. It looks like that as there is no permanent abode of these people and they keep on move in search of food and fodder for them and their cattles. Water scarcity is the main problem of desert and Cholistan is not an exception³⁷. They have no safe places to securely keep their wealth and thus convert earning in the form of ornaments. The current study will be the first of its kind to completely study the past and present, roles and status women in Cholistan

1.11 Rationale of the Study

Cholistan desert is the remote area with inadequate basic facilities that are available in the urban areas of Pakistan. Based on a very simplistic life, the inhabitants of Cholistan

³⁷Muhammad Asif Raza et al., "Ethno-Botanical Remedies Used by Pastoralists for the Treatment of Livestock Diseases in Cholistan Desert, Pakistan," *Journal of ethnopharmacology* 151, no. 1 (2014).334.

migrate within and out of Cholistan where they find easy access to food and fodder generally and water specifically. Apparently, the role of women is confined to work as house-wife and taking care of live-stock, but in fact, women very actively perform their multidimensional assigned roles. Cholistan being desert area is quite backward as compared to the modern and developed world. But it cannot be said that life is just static there. In Cholistan, life is still going-on under the existing rough circumstances.

Understanding of actual roles and status of women cannot be developed merely by study of their current situation. Therefore, for exploration of their life phenomenon, it is necessary to dig out about their past along with their current situation. Furthermore, roles and statuses of women are social phenomenon which cannot be studied exclusively. Therefore, one of the objective is exploration of ethnography of the area and separate chapter (chapter no. 2) has been constructed which describes history, geography, architecture, weather conditions, language, dietary pattern, arts and crafts, living conditions and social organization in the Cholistan desert. This chapter is an eye for an outsider to view the Cholistan. The study of social institutions and roles of women in them is more meaningful after getting familiarization with the ethnography of the Cholistan.

Women in Cholistan are lagging behind socially and economically and their life is invisible. That is why there is a dearth of literature on the subject which can provide scientific grounds for their development. Study of the past and present roles and status of women in Cholistan will make us able to become acquainted with the actual condition of women of Cholistan, phenomenon of change occurring in their life, hurdles and dimensions of this change. This understanding will make phenomenon more exposed which can further lead towards the ways for improvement.

The available literature on the social life of women in Cholistan is scarce. Only few books e.g. Auj N. 1991 & 1995, Mugal, Rafiq 1997 and Dar, S. Z. 2007 present a picture of

the history, economy and archaeology of Cholistan. However to my knowledge, no scientific literature is available on the social and economic roles of women and change in them with the passage of time. The existing literature on Cholistan hardly mentions the women. They have mostly been discussed in context of their colorful dresses and physical appearance which has nothing to do with their development.

Therefore, the current study endeavours to fill the literature gap by not only exploring the roles and status of women in the Cholistan by surveying their contribution in the established social institutions but would also look at the historic pattern of the change in women's role over the past 40 years or so. The research would be first of its kind to historically explore the roles and status of women in Cholistan over the period of last four decades and find how their role has changed within the specific time frame. Moreover, the research would be a building block for planners and government administrations to know the insight out of the women's socio economic condition and make better decisions to improve the social, economic, educational and health conditions of women in Cholistan.

The study attempts to explore the transformed role of women in Cholistan over the past 40 years by testing the question that what are the main changes in the roles of women in social institutions and resultantly what are impacts of role change on their status in Cholistan.

My research question is „what are impacts of the induced social changes on the role and status of women in Cholistan?“. Life of women in Cholistan has similarities with that of the rural women of Pakistan whose life is story of miseries due to the lack of education, health, economic marginalization and over all poor social status in all walks of life.

In this study, role and status of the women in the context of Cholistan along with their contribution in socio economic life coupled with social change occurring during the last forty years has been investigated. An effort has been made for explanation of the social

and economic setup of life of women of Cholistan and how change occurred and affected the socio-economic condition of women. This is the first complete study on women about their past and present role and status in Cholistan.

1.12 Scope of Study

This study will provide an invaluable addition to both theoretical and practical knowledge about women of Cholistan and change in their life patterns. Specifically, this study will contribute in the following ways: Firstly, results will be beneficial for the capacity building and strengthening of women of Cholistan and new ways can be designed for making use of their full potential.

Secondly, it will provide results to policy makers, governmental and nongovernmental organizations in the light of changing circumstances so that more beneficial services can be provided for the development of women.

Thirdly, the study will also explore the phenomenon of social change in Cholistan, understanding of which cannot only explore and accelerate change but also enables us to lead its dimensions positively for development.

Fourthly, it will strengthen understanding about women life in different physical setting and exploration of their unique conditions and requirements which could drive the situation towards betterment of these women.

Fifthly, it will expose the perspective of Cholistani women in terms of their expectations and needs, it will also encourage the researcher for more effective work in this field. Sixthly, it will make expose the life phenomenon of women of Cholistan to outer world that they are also something more than their dresses.

Seventhly, it will add to the existing knowledge base of social work, as social work profession is deeply concerned about development across the gender.

Lastly, this study will explore identification of individuality of women which will open new dimensions for development of women folk in the Cholistan.

1.13 Structure of the Study

The study is comprised of 10 chapters; brief detail of contents of each chapter is as following:

Chapter One is the introduction of the study. It includes social change, social institutions, social change in Cholistan, current status of women, changing roles and status of women of Cholistan. It also has rationale, scope and structure of the study.

Chapter Two is description of introduction to Cholistan, etymology, history, geography, economy, climate, language, local customs and traditions, public and private agencies working for development of Cholistan.

Chapter Three presents review of literature which contains functions of social institutions in nomadic societies around the world. Nomads and social institutions in the Rajasthan, India has been discussed as their socio economic conditions resemble with that of nomads living in Cholistan. Roles and status of women in various nomadic societies and change with the passage of time is also part of this chapter.

Chapter Four discusses research methodology of the study. It includes selection of appropriate research method, sampling techniques, tools of data collection, field work, analysis procedure and problem faced during carrying research.

Chapter Five explains findings on family, marriage and religion as social institutions in Cholistan. Functions of social institutions such marriage, family and religion. Furthermore, changing role and status of women during last four decades in the Cholistan has been discussed.

Chapter Six presents findings on health, education and economic as social institutions in the Cholistan. Women's role in these institutions and change that has occurred over last forty years has been discussed.

Chapter Seven comprises analysis on marriage, family and religion. How the roles and status of women in Cholistan are influenced by environment and social factors.

Chapter Eight contains analysis of data on health, education and economic institutions. Past and current roles of women in these institutions have been discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Nine discusses theoretical frame work of the study. Theories relevant to the study have been discussed and main concepts have connected with the current study for establishing its relationship with the existing knowledge base.

Chapter Ten contains conclusions and summary of the study. It also presents future recommendations developed on the basis of the findings, discussions and arguments in previous chapters.

2. Chapter II: Introduction of Cholistan

This section gives detailed note on the Cholistan and its history, architecture, sources of water, migration, animal husbandry and developmental initiatives in the Cholistan.

2.1 Etymology of Cholistan

Locally known as *Rohi*, Cholistan has various descriptions of its name. As per some historians, it is derived from the Turkish word „Chol“ that means wilderness unplanted waste or an uninhabited territory (characteristics of desert). Moreover, the word, „Chol“ is also used in Kurdish language for the connotation of discarded waterless piece of land. But, among the local people, it is popularly known as „*Rohi*“ especially nuance for the area of greater Cholistan. With association of *Rohi*, the people of Cholistan are also called as *Rohillas*. Likely, in Pashto language, meaning of *Rohi* is sandy desert, therefore, the origin of the word can be established from this very language³⁸. People of Cholistan identify areas out of Cholistan as „Sindh“ or „*abadi*“. The word *Rohi* has some fantasy within it as the local people consider it the sacred, poised and blessed one.

2.2 History of Bahawalpur and Cholistan

History of Bahawalpur is divided into different parts, as the area has been occupied and ruled by different conqueror in different periods of history, here is detail.

2.3 History of Agro-fertility in Cholistan

Historically, Cholistan was not a barren land; rather it was full of greenery and richness of land with trademark of cultivation. Cholistan has been the hub of Hakra valley civilization around 4000 BC. The rivers kept supplying water until 1200 BC, but near 600 BC, they were omitted after indiscretion in their flow. Hakra civilization is considered as one of the longest among the history of civilizations. During that era, monsoon was full of rains in Cholistan same like Indus valley. Climatic change brought drastic transformation

³⁸F. Ahmad, Z. Ali, and S. Farooq, "Historical and Archaeological Perspectives of Soil Degradation in Cholistan," *Revista Sociedade & Natureza* 1, no. 1 (2009).864.

that converted Cholistan into desert. The process of desertification started after the Hakra River got dry leaving this land a grazer. Hakra civilization of that time could be compared with ancient civilization of Harrapan, Egyptian and Mesopotamian in advancement of culture. Among other factors, hostile invading was the most important in the eradication of this civilization³⁹.

Furthermore, the hydrographic changes started in 2nd century BC which caused blockage in the supply of water to river Hakra around the 3rd BC. Different writers mentioned various reasons of drying up of Hakra River. It is certain that river Ghaggara/Hakra flowed with peripheries of Thar Desert independently towards Run of Kuch. Mughal referring Whilhelmy (1969) stated this event happened between 1500 and 1000 BC⁴⁰.

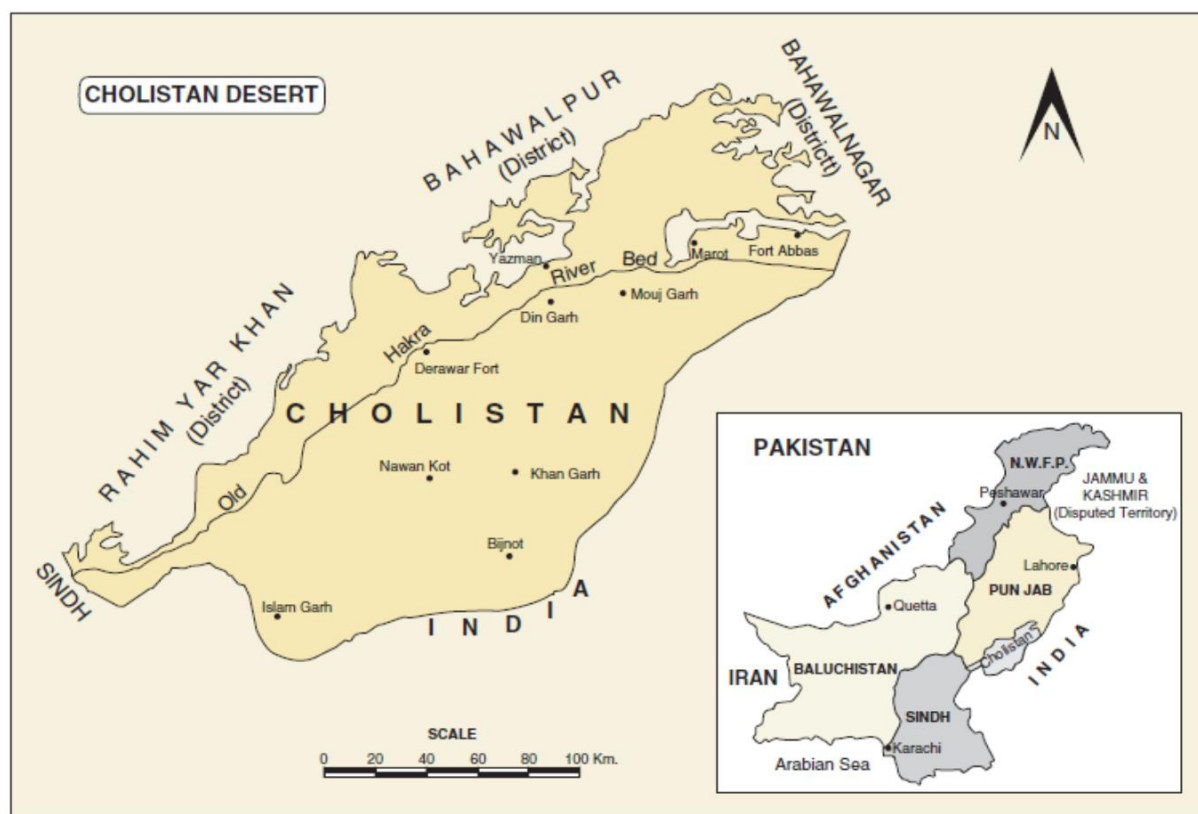


Figure 1. Map of Cholistan. *Source:* Akhtar, (2006);

³⁹ Ahmad, "Agro-Pastoral Systems in Cholistan."65.

⁴⁰ Mughal, *Ancient Cholistan: Archaeology and Architecture*. 22-23.

2.4 History of Bahawalpur and Cholistan Area

In the earlier 18th century, Daudpotra Abbasis became the rulers of Bahawalpur region. This area has been ruled by different clans in early medieval period like Pratiharas, Chuhanas, Paramars, Guhilas⁴¹.

This Abbasis family settled in this area with Amir Sadiq Muhammed Khan as their first formal head/ruler. They first came to Uch Sharif upon the invitation of Bokharis and Gillanis. Governor of Multan gave the Abbasids the area of Shikarpur as *Jagir* (reward). After the death of Amir Muhammed Bahawal, his son who is also known as the founder of Bahawalpur city, came into the power. He was issueless; hence the power was transferred to his brother Mubarik Khan who extended his territory to Kot Sabzal and Pakpattan⁴².

Afterwards, Nawab Jafar Khan, the descendant of Abbasids, established his rule with great valor and enormous administrative capabilities. He established relationships with British government and other rulers. He was succeeded by his son Nawab Sadiq Muhammed Khan-II, who was succeeded by his son Nawab Sadiq Muhammed Khan-III. Fateh Khan, his brother unseated Nawab Sadiq Muhammed Khan-III. He died in relatively young age in 1858, after his death, his son Nawab Bahawal Khan-IV succeeded him at the age of 5 years. He had only son Nawan. Till 1879 British rulers managed the state affairs. In 1899 after his death, Muharak Khan also called as Nawab Bahawal Khan-V succeeded him. He was founder of many institutions of Bahawalpur. After his death in 1907, Nawab Sadiq Muhammed Khan-V succeeded him. At that time, Nawab Muhamamd Sadiq Khan-V was 3 years old; he came into power in 1924. He is said to be true founder of development of

⁴¹Nurul Zaman Ahmad Auj, *Ancient Bahawalpur*(Caravan Book Centre, 1987).45-47.

⁴²Ahmad, "Agro-Pastoral Systems in Cholistan."5.

Bahawalpur which is now the division of Punjab province after the dismemberment of one unit system⁴³.

2.5 Geographical Division of Cholistan

Major portion of Cholistan is barren hence not suitable for cultivation. It consists of deep mass of sand which makes access of water difficult even by wells. Cholistan is spread over about 26,100 km², of which 2,800 km² is irrigated and the remaining part consists on arid rangelands⁴⁴.

This dry bed of land leads its population of 0.155 million toward nomadic life. It occupies near about one third of the total area of district Bahawalpur. From the total area of Cholistan 6, 655,360 acres, 10,11,200 acres fall in the territory of Bahawalnagar and 16,16,000 acres of Cholistan are in the boundary of Rahim Yar Khan and the rest, 40,28,160 acres lies in the territory of Bahawalpur. The phyto-geographical divisions of desert can be made on “(i) sand dunes (ii) sandy plans (iii) compact soil with gravels (iv) saline”⁴⁵. Sub division of Cholistan is made on the basis of lesser and greater Cholistan because geographically, it is divided into lesser (smaller) Cholistan and greater Cholistan.

⁴³. Ibid.

⁴⁴. Umar Farooq, Muhammad Iqbal and Munir Ahmad, (2007) Livestock Farming in Cholistan Desert of Pakistan: Setting the Development Strategies, *Annals of Arid Zone* 46(1): 1-22.

⁴⁵M. Arshad and A.R Rao, "Phyto-Geographical Divisions of Cholistan Desert," *Proceedings of the sixth all Pakistan Geographical Conference 1993. Islamia Univ Bahawalpur Department of geography. Conference Proceedings* (1995). 55.

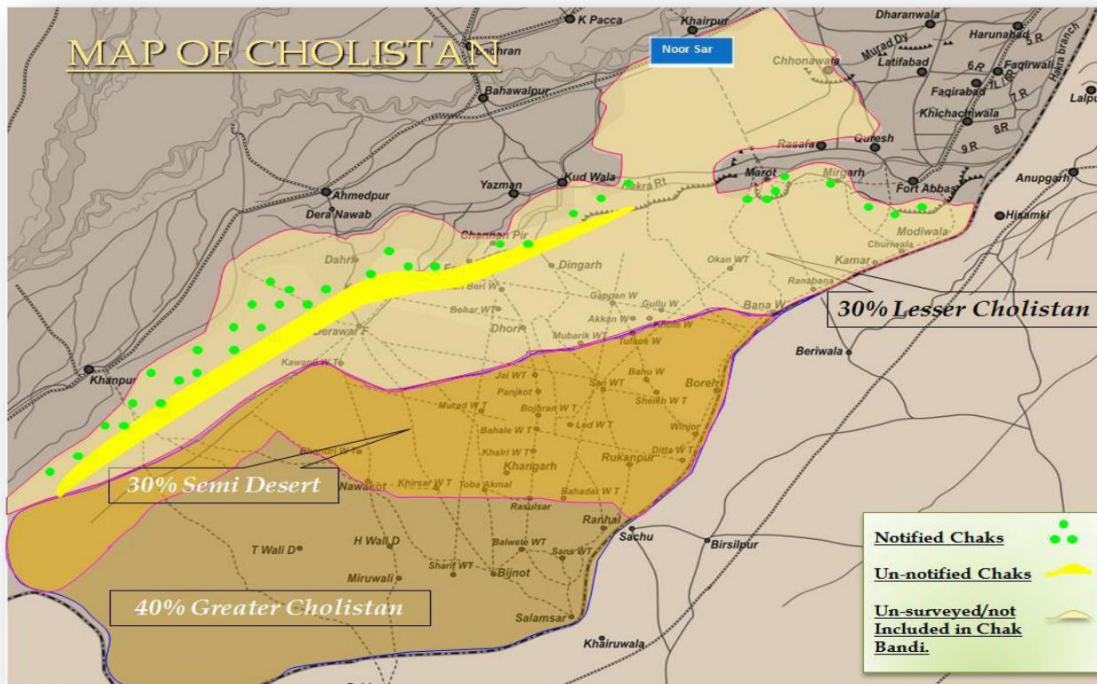


Figure 2. Geographical division of Cholistan. *Source:* Map by Cholistan Development Authority (2012)

2.6 Lesser Cholistan

As the name implies, lesser Cholistan is comprised of smaller portion of Cholistan. This part consists of the flat grounds having saline alluvial, commonly known as „Dhar“, at some places with sandy ridge of lower height. It is the northern, relatively fertile, part of Cholistan covering 7,770 km. Depth of clay flats in lesser Cholistan is almost similar in all area having range from 30 to 90 cm, pH ranges from 8.2 to 8.4 and 8.8 to 9.6 in its saline-sodic or saline soil⁴⁶.

2.7 Greater Cholistan

Southern part of Cholistan sandwiched between lesser Cholistan, Thar of Sind, Pakistan and Rajasthan of India, is called Greater Cholistan. It is called „greater“ because it is comprised of 70% of the total Cholistan area. This part is mainly sand dunes ranging in

⁴⁶. Ghulam. Akbar, T.N. Khan, and M. Arshad, "Cholistan Desert, Pakistan," *Rangelands* (1996).123.

height from 20-120 feet locally called as *Tibba*⁴⁷. It is an area with scanty cultivation being totally dependent on rain.

Greater Cholistan covers an area of 46, 58,760 acres generally called as *Rohi*. This area is in alluvium having succession of deep mass of sand over its surface, due to substratum of clay, access to underground water is hardest at some places which have deposits of Amorphous Sulphate of lime. Due to the scarcity of water, people mostly keep on migrating from greater Cholistan to other settled areas.

A foreign visitor named Tod called the greater part of Cholistan as Marusthali (The valley of death). It is part of greater desert of Indo-Pak as it is extended to Thar in Sind province of Pakistan and to Rajasthan state in India⁴⁸.

2.8 Architecture of Cholistan

Cholistan is rich in art and architecture especially its Uch region and many other urban settlements areas. A number of forts found in Cholistan are the reflection of its architecture. Here is description of its architecture in Cholistan.

2.8.1 Forts

There were forty forts in the desert across east-west of Cholistan with the old belt of river Hakra. These forts were mostly built with mud or sun-dried bricks with a veneer of burnt brick having the characteristics of mediaeval Rajhistani architecture.

Most of these forts have demolished with the passage of time but few still exist such as Derawar, Moj Garh, Marrot, Islamgarh, Jamgarh and Phulra. Some other notable forts are Khairgarh, Khangharh, Macchki, Muridwala, Nawan Kot, Fatheh Garh, Khandera, Liyria, Munde Shaheed, Ruken Pur, Sahibgarh, Sadar Garh and Sarvahi (Seorai).

⁴⁷ Cholistan Development Authority, "A Brief of Interventions by Cholistan Development Authority," Office record (2009).

⁴⁸ Auj, *Legacy of Cholistan*.11

The most famous one is Derawar fort that is adjacent to Derawar mosque and Derawar graveyard. It was named after his founder, Dera Rawal Deograh, a prince of Jaisalmer (India). With the passage of time, it became Derawar. It remained under rule of many warriors, in AD 1747 Amir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi -I took the control of this fort from the Sikh ruler Rawal Rai Singh .It also remained the capital of Abbasi State before the establishment of Bahawalpur State⁴⁹.

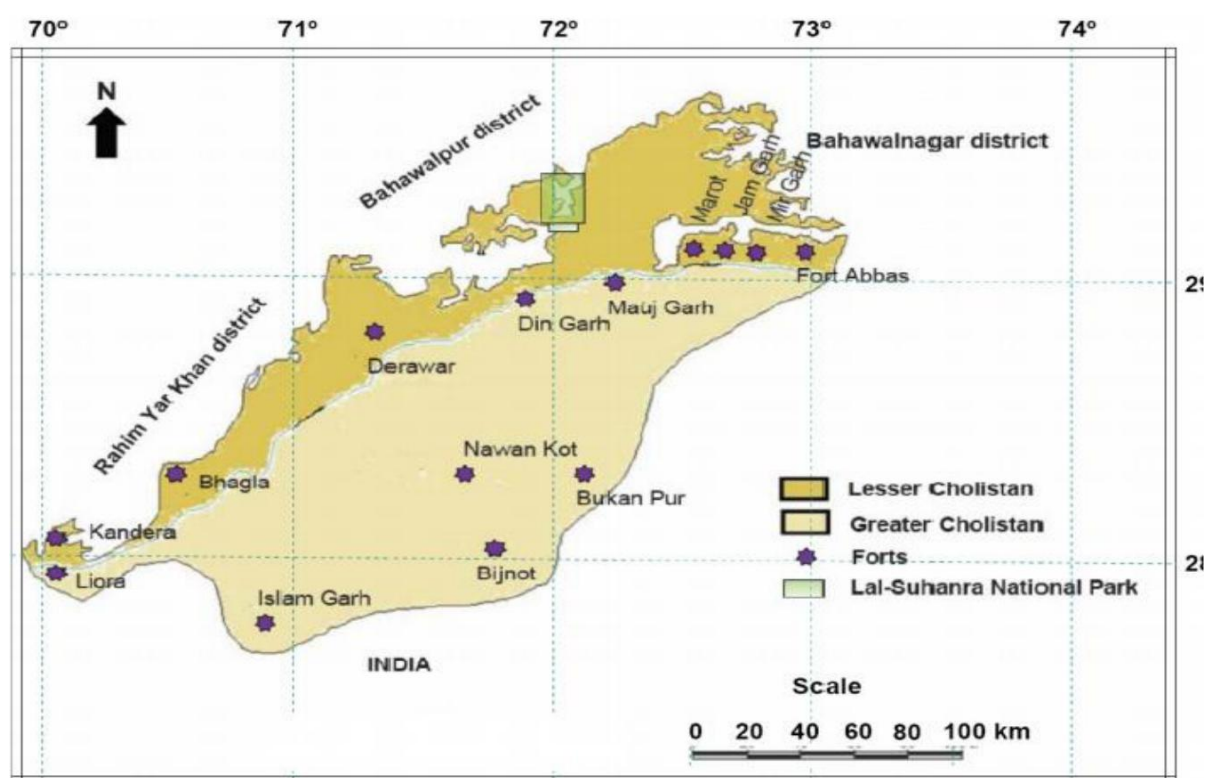


Figure 3. Forts of Cholistan. *Source:* Hamed, M (2011)

⁴⁹. S.Z. Dar, *Sights in the Sands of Cholistan: Bahawalpur's History and Architecture*(Oxford University Press, 2007).14-17.

2.9 Weather Conditions in Cholistan

Cholistan is the hottest desert in Pakistan⁵⁰. It is situated at 112 m above the sea level and fall in the subtropical area with high temperature in the summer. Average temperature is 28.33°C, which goes up till 38.5°C in the summer season. The hottest month is June, where on certain days; mercury goes up to 50°C and above.⁵¹. Due to high temperature, evapo-transpiration rate is quite high as it stands at 300 centimetres per annum⁵². Anyhow, during raining in the winter, temperature fluctuates between 3°C and 27°C⁵³. Moreover, it is a sandy desert with the average rainfall of 100-200 mm in its eastern and western parts respectively⁵⁴.

Rainy season starting from June lasts until September but rainfall is not consistent in quantity and duration as sometimes; there is no rain for years that results in drought cycle, repeated once in every ten years⁵⁵. Sometime winds of west moving from Persian Gulf come towards desert and create thundering storms which sometime continue for weeks⁵⁶.

2.10 Salient Features of Culture of Cholistan

Cholistan has its distinctive culture which has certain dominant features. Here are some of the important elements and features of culture of Cholistan.

⁵⁰M.A Geyh and D. Ploethner, "An Applied Palaeohydrological Study in Cholistan, Thar Desert, Pakistan," *International Association of Hydrological Sciences, Publication*, no. 232 (1995).120.

⁵¹I. Ali, M.S. Chaudhry, and U. Farooq, "Camel Rearing in Cholistan Desert of Pakistan," *Pak Vet J* 29, no. 2 (2009).

⁵²Ahmad, "Agro-Pastoral Systems in Cholistan."66.

⁵³"Socio-Economic Dimensions and Ecological Destruction in Cholistan," " *Socio-economic dimensions and ecological destruction in Cholistan*" (2002). 22.

⁵⁴Cholistan Development Authority, "Facts Sheet About Cholistan," ed. Cholistan Development Authority(Bahawalpur2009).

⁵⁵Rubina Akhter and Muhammad Arshad, "Arid Rangelands in the Cholistan Desert (Pakistan)," *Science et changements planétaires/Sécheresse* 17, no. 1 (2006). p.211

M. Arshad et al., "Morpho-Genetic Variability Potential of *Cenchrus Ciliaris* L. From Cholistan Desert, Pakistan," *Pakistan Journal of Botany* 39(2007). p.1482.

⁵⁶Khalid and Gilani, "Distinctive Cultural and Geographical Legacy of Bahawalpur."P.3

2.10.1 Language

The language spoken in the Cholistan is called Saraiki. Saraiki language is widely spoken in Southern Punjab and in some parts of Sindh, Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It has six varieties⁵⁷ and is one of the oldest languages of Indus valley civilization.

There are many suppositions about the evolution of this language. Since its existence, different names have been given to Saraiki language in different regions and periods, though, its exact name and origin is not known well. It came into existence with the arrival of Aryans into the Indus valley. After the invasion of Aryans, this language has been named as Seen Dab, Warchada, Ap Bharnash and Adh Naagri. Muslims historians and travellers got familiar with Saraiki in Sindh⁵⁸. Etymology of the word „Saraiki“ has been traced differently. In 111 Hijra, Sindh was divided into parts on political basis known as upper Sindh and lower Sindh. After this division, the language of upper part of Sindh was called Saraiki or Saroki. The word „Saro“ means upper or chief, so Saraiki or Saroki meaning the language spoken in upper part by rulers⁵⁹. Gradually, it changed from Saveras to Saraiki.

Historians agree that in this oldest settlement of human being, there lived many human races such as Gond, Bheel, Munda, Kolari, Bhoom Taj and Sunthal. Linguists have traced that language spoken by all these races of pre-historic time was “Sunthali”. The

⁵⁷ Muhammad Safeer Awan, Abdul Baseer, and Muhammad Sheeraz, "Outlining Saraiki Phonetics: A Comparative Study of Saraiki and English Sound System," *Language in India* 12, no. 7 (2012).

⁵⁸ Maqbool Hassan Gilani, "Historical Background of Saraiki Language," *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS)* 33, no. 1 (2013).10.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 10

contents of Sunthali were superseded by Saraiki which showed that Sunthali was the primary stage of Saraiki that provided it the base to set up itself in developed form⁶⁰.

After the Sunthalis, Darawadians occupied this part of sub-continent and ruled for a long time. In the Darawadians era, there was peace in the region that helped to flourish knowledge and culture, resultantly it helped the Darawadians language to get its alphabets. Till-date, the alphabets of Saraiki language are the same as that of Darawadians language. It is also proven that “Sansikrat” adopted its alphabets from Darawadians through Saraiki. After the Darawadians, Indus Valley was ruled by Assurians. The language of the Assurians was „Asurki“. The origin of Assurians was Arab but as they had lived in Iran for long time, so they brought Persian with them that resultantly influenced Saraiki⁶¹.

When Asurki people ultimately met decline, so along with their rule, their language also saw deterioration. In different regions of Indus Valley, this language was given different names under local influence and in the central areas it was called Saraiki⁶². Saraiki has been divided into different varieties depending upon name of region in which it is spoken such as Multani, Riasti, Jhangi and Dera Wali⁶³.

2.10.2 Diet

In Cholistan, common practice of taking meal is twice a day. There are several factors contributing towards this dietary habit such as nomadic life style and un-availability of sufficient food. Nomads living in Cholistan are suffering from poverty and have

⁶⁰ Muòhammad Bashâir Aòhmad òZâmâi Bahāvalpāurâi, "The Seraiki Language," (Markaz Seraiki Zaban-te-Adab (Rahawalpur), 1981). 7.

⁶¹. Ibid., 9.

⁶². Ibid. p.12.

⁶³. Awan, Baseer, and Sheeraz, "Outlining Saraiki Phonetics: A Comparative Study of Saraiki and English Sound System."3.

insufficient food for them⁶⁴. Diet in Cholistan consists of bread, milk, meat and butter. Grains like wheat and barley are collected as major source of diet for the whole year. Milk is obtained from cows, camels, goats and sheep. The milk is churned; whey and butter are separated which form the important part of food. Milk has significant importance as a part of diet in the life of Cholistani people⁶⁵. Meat is got from pet animals like sheep, goat, cow and camel. In the Cholistan, it was common practice that the animals like goats or lambs were slaughtered on social events; arrival of special guests, marriage and birth, but currently, mutton is arranged rarely on the special occasions. If people of Cholistan want to appreciate any food item, metaphorically they say it is like deer meat. Use of fruits is not common and only locally available fruits like jujube berry are eaten subject to their availability.

Forty years back in greater Cholistan, milk was an integral part of meal with the chapatti, even taking only milk was considered as substitute of meal. Currently though, it is also an important part of the routinely food intake but not as much as it was in the past.

Since there are no vegetables grown or otherwise available in the Cholistan, so women collect local shrubs like *Phog* and *Phagosi* and use them as vegetables for cooking curry. These self-seeding shrubs grow at most of the places in the open fields after rainfall in the Cholistan. Pulses are also used for cooking curry as they can be stored for a long period and can be used at the time of need. On every visit to settled area, male bring some grains like wheat flour and pulses which are consumed till the next visit. Since people living in the greater Cholistan cannot pay frequent visits to the settled areas, so every food item needed from outside is brought in the sufficient quantity so that its supply may be ensured

⁶⁴. Imran Sharif Chaudhary, "An Empeirical Analysis of the Determinants of Rural Poverty in Pakistan: A Case Study of Bahawalpur District with Special Reference to Cholistan" (Ph.D thesis, Islamia University, Bahawalpur, 2003).

⁶⁵. Ahmad,F (2002) "Socio-Economic Dimensions and Ecological Destruction in Cholistan."50.

over a long period of time. When there is a deficiency of eatables, Cholistan people find some alternatives like they mix wheat flour in the whey and take it as one time meal.

With the passage of time, a little change in the dietary habits and patterns has been observed in Cholistan. For instance, in some parts of lesser Cholistan, there is trend of taking meal thrice a day. It is because of some conveyance facilities available for getting grains, vegetable and pulses more easily as compared to greater Cholistan. Similarly, practice of taking milk is getting replaced with taking tea. Just like in every walk of life, there is gender discrimination in distribution of food in Cholistan; male are served first and dish up with good part of the cooked food as compared to females.

2.10.3 Dress

Cholistan dress is the true reflection of its local culture and weather conditions. Unique design and colours of dress are symbol of identity for people of Cholistan. Both men and women have different dresses according to the needs and requirements of season. Generally, dress of women consists on *ghagra* (a long skirt and long shirt) and a long scarf locally called as *dopata* or *chunri*⁶⁶. There are two types of *ghaghras* used mostly by women, one simply stitched and the other with fine embroidery. Women cover only their head with *dopata* whereas face remained uncovered.

There is variation in dress patterns within different regions of Cholistan; like, women in district Raheem Yaar Khan wear traditional dresses with Sindhi embroidery. Similarly, Hindu women wear white bangles in their full arms or up to elbows. Women of Magwal tribe always wear embroidered *Kurti* and bangles in their full arms. Hindu women wear *Ghaghra Choli* instead of *Shalwar Qameez*. There is a trend of white strip at the end of *Ghaghra* worn by women in Cholistan.

⁶⁶Habib Ur Rahman Maral, "Cholistan Ki Tareekh O Saqafaqdaryae Hakra Kyasasi Nazryat," in *Rohi Ky Khadokhal*, ed. Syed Arif Muaeen Baly(Raheem Yar Khan: Action Aid International Pakistan, 2007).156.

Males mostly wear *tehmad* (a cloth used as trousers), *kurta./Qameez* (long and loose shirt) and *Patka* (a long piece of cloth used to cover head and shoulders) in the summer season. The *Patka* is helpful for protection from harshness of severe heat and sandy storms. In the winter season head is also covered from cold with a piece of cloth locally named as *ajrak, loee* or *lokar*.

Presently, in lesser Cholistan there is change in the dressing pattern of both males and females. Previous dress has been given up by younger females but women in their fifties and belonging to lower social class living nearby greater Cholistan use the same traditional dress. Many of the women use *qameez* and *tehmand* now in lesser part. Women have also started wearing *shalwar Qameez* in some of the areas. At few places, children also wear pants and shirt especially on marriage and other ceremonies. This trend is more noticeable among young boys because to their inspiration from relatives living in urban areas. *Patka* is still being used especially while travelling in desert.

At present, in greater Cholistan, male wear *tehmand* and *korta* but now, there is also trend of *shalwar* instead of *tehmad*. In lesser Cholistan, there is more consciousness about children dressing. *Tehmand* is popular among elderly men in greater Cholistan. Mostly young males wear *Shalwar Qameez* because of their frequent visits to city or settled areas.

Hindu women are more cling to their primitive dresses. It is due to their low socio economic status and spirit to keep their traditions alive and protected. It is compulsory for Hindu grown up girls to wear *ghagra*.

2.10.4 Jewelry

Jewelry wearing is very popular tradition in Cholistan and has special importance in the social life of Cholistan. Wearing jewelry is not only concern of women; men also wear some jewelry specifically on certain occasions. Commonly found ornaments are Cholistan

popa (nose gay), katmala (necklace), bali (ear ring), nath (nose ring), kangan (bangles), pazeb (anklet) *bula*, *potriyan*, *chandanhar*, *chilki*, *hansli* and *gana* (hand ring) etc.

Cholistani jewelry is unique in design and features; therefore, it is prepared by traditional Cholistan based goldsmiths only. For Cholistani jewelry, there is a special market near Bahawalpur city called as Feroza. There are two types of ornaments, one being worn casually and others used for special occasions such as marriage or birth ceremony.

Association of a Cholistani woman with jewelry starts from her birth. In the early years of a baby girl, nose and ears are pierced by elderly women and at least an ear ring is put. From birth to marriage and up till widowhood, every important step of women's life has some connection with wearing a specific type and design of jewelry. Traditionally jewelry was a source of safety and protection of wealth in a nomadic society.

But, Greater Cholistan has witnessed a change in the jewelry wearing trend. With comparison to the past, now women put on small number of ornaments. Moreover, change in traditional perception of social status attached with quantity of silver and gold in the form of ornaments is also observed. Now a days, here people also give importance to only gold made ornaments. Therefore, over-all, trend of jewelry wearing is reducing gradually. Though, few women keep wearing heavy jewelry all the times, but majority wears only the lighter ones.

With the passage of time, artificial jewelry is also being used in the social gatherings only because of the high prices of original ornaments that have gone beyond the purchasing power of local people. Hence, to maintain social status among the relatives and neighbours as well as satisfaction of their desire for jewelry, artificial and animated jewelry is getting place.

Though, Hindu women still bedeck themselves with traditional jewelry but quantity of silver and gold is reduced. A widow is not supposed to wear any ornament after her

husband's death. In Cholistan, Hindus wear different stones and gems because of their belief that it can positively influence their fate. On the other hand, Muslims believe in amulets for their protection against evils and odds, therefore, everybody wears gold and silver due to one reason or the other in the Cholistan desert⁶⁷.

Till-date, jewelry is the part and parcel of dower and bridal gifts. It is customary for the Cholistani people to gift jewelry to their daughter and daughter-in-law according to their financial circumstances. As compared to the past, quantity of silver made ornaments given to bride has decreased from kilograms to grams only. Now gold is replacing silver due to their interaction with outer world. An important reason for decreasing jewelry in lesser Cholistan is due to emergence of crimes in the area. Ornaments such as specific bangles and anklets have become identity signs of marital status. Married and un-married women use different jewelry according to the traditions of Cholistan.

2.10.5 Art and Crafts

Cholistan is rich in arts and crafts. Locally, a number of handicrafts are prepared, mostly by women. Women of Jat families weave the cotton and prepare fine cloth called *khada*, besides *chautah*, bedclothes, *khes*, *dotala*, *lungie*, *rally* and *lungies* are made with silk like *badrumi*, *dolhari*, *nodkar*, *lahrdar*, *patranwali*, and *doshala*. Another specialty of Cholistan is *ajrak* and *chunri*. *Ajrak* is famous due to its special and delicate printing technique which is done on both side of cloth mostly in pattern of indigo blue and red. *Chunri* is another form of *odhani* worn mostly by young girls. Dyeing of both *kacha* and *packa* color is done locally. In every village, there are one or two families of dyers called *rungsaz* or *nilgars*. Different colours motions⁶⁸.

⁶⁷. N. Auj, *Cholistan: Land and People* (Multan:Caravan Book Centre, 1991).72.

⁶⁸. Ibid. 68.



Figure 4. *Ralli, Chunri* and *Khes*. Source: Pictures taken by researcher during data collection.

Cholistan desert is part of the Indus valley which has a tradition of festivals. These have been the source of gathering people and also become the center for exchanging goods. One of the famous *Mela* of Indus valley, *Mela of Channar Peer*, is celebrated in March every year⁶⁹.

2.11 Legends of Cholistan

Chanan Peer and Khawaja Ghulam Fareed are the legends of Cholistan. *Dola Sayen* (Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi, the last ruler of Bahawalpur) is also very popular and highly honored in the Cholistan. Local people love him due to his kind nature. He believed in democratic development, once he took initiative to bring irrigation system in Cholistan but cancelled the plan upon the request of native people who wanted to let the Cholistan be

⁶⁹Ibid.

desert. Bakhat Faqeer, a sufi poet, Mosa Lakh Pal, a soft-hearted robber, Hazrat Phelwan Shaheed fought for widow and died bravely, Chansre Tanwari, fearless against jinats, Jia Bhadar, an extremely brave man and Gamaan Bibi, the only famous female, a wise and poor-loving, religiously and physically strong women, afterwards, also became the wife of ruler of Bahawalpur are the famous personalities⁷⁰.

2.12 Living Conditions in Cholistan

In Cholistan, permanent mobility of people in search of water and fodder has deep effects on the life style and living conditions. Being a desert area, it is hard to access Cholistan (especially greater part) physically for outsiders and visitors, therefore, local people have little interaction with the outside world. This has created a cultural lag between Cholistan and settled communities. Extreme climatic conditions and unique geographical features have made this area a hard living place for human and animals. That is why; first and foremost struggle of people is for their survival. Extreme climatic and socio-economic conditions have shaped the life of local people quite different from that of settled areas. But people of Cholistan have adjusted with the local climatic and geographical conditions in such a way that they are not only surviving in these hostile conditions but even they are not willing to leave the place at the cost of shifting in settled areas.

2.13 Types of Settlements in Cholistan

There are three types of settlements found in Cholistan

1. Permanent settlements in canal colony
2. Semi-permanent settlements that have some features of permanent settlements
3. Temporary settlements around water reservoirs (*toba*) or well.

The population of Cholistan is nomadic and staying at one place is dependent upon the availability of water. They keep on moving from one *toba* (water pond) to another for

⁷⁰. Ibid. 395.

water. When all the *toba* get dry, people shift to semi-settlement, and in case of extreme drought, they migrate to permanent settlement nearest to the desert.

Temporary settlements are established around *toba*, generally one *toba* is associated with one family or clan, who is responsible for its maintenance. Family or clan living around *toba* leave the place when there is scarcity of water and return back during rainy season. The family gets shift to another *toba* in case their owned one is dried up. Semi-permanent settlement has some features of permanency like fort, shrine, well and some permanent dwellings, but inhabitation is not permanent here. Most families living in such settlements send their animals to *Rohi* for several months in the rainy season. In the desert, permanent settlements are in the western and northern edges of Cholistan, where way of life is quite similar to that of settled agricultural communities because of canal colonization⁷¹.

2.13.1 Ghopa

A *ghopa* (hut with thatch roof) is the basic living unit and is used as shelter from severe weather conditions and storage of household goods in Cholistan. Usually, all the *ghopa* are situated at same location or at distance of only few hundred meters from the *toba*. Maximum number of *ghopa* at one place is round about 25 to 30 while minimum number ranges up to 7 to 10. A *ghopa* is circular in shape with muddy wall from ground to 8 feet in height normally. It is established near *toba* (water source). Commonly, semi-permanent settlements are situated near *toba* or well and fort⁷².

A *Ghopa* is used for multipurpose like as bed room, store room and guest room. Some people limit its wall up till 5-6 feet high whereas some raise it to 8-10 feet. Flexible branches of locally found trees are twisted and clutched into the wall to the top where they meet in a dome shape. *Ghopa* has a thatch roof made from *phong* and *chaghan*. In the construction of

⁷¹Mumtaz Kamil Khan, "Rural Islam and Change. Case Study: Cholistan," *Habitat International* 7, no. 3 -- 4 (1983). 168.

⁷²Kamil Khan Mumtaz, "Habitat and Desert: The Case of Cholistan," in *The Changing of Rural Habitat. Volume I: Case Studies*(The aga khan awards, 1982).17.

walls, a mixture of clay, dung and water is used. *Katran* is added in this mud for adding fragrance. In most of the cases, from eastern side, there is a gap in the muddy walls which serves as entering path. There are no doors of the *ghopa*. In many cases, there is 1-2 feet rough fence made of woods and bushes. In general one family has one *ghopa* but some large families also possess more than one.



Figure 5. View of *Ghopa* in Cholistan. Source: Picture taken by researcher during data collection.

2.13.2 Structure of a House in Lesser Cholistan

In the greater Cholistan area, majority of people live in *ghopa*. Structured houses are rarely found there especially in greater Cholistan. In lesser Cholistan, there are brick and mortar made rooms for living. At some places rooms are built from sun dried raw bricks whereas in many cases fire bricks have been used for construction of houses⁷³. In lesser Cholistan, there is proper structure of house except kitchen. There is courtyard with earthen floor. Similarly there is muddy boundary wall around the house with the height of almost 1-2 feet. Here there are bedsteads for everyone in the family for sitting and sleeping. In the lesser Cholistan there is concept and presence of a guest room for the visitors at some places,

⁷³ Kamil Khan Mumtaz, "Habitat and Desert: The Case of Cholistan," In *The Changing of Rural Habitat. Volume I: Case Studies* (The Aga Khan Awards, 1982).p.24.

whereas in majority of the cases, female visitors sit inside the house while male visitors are offered to sit in the shade of nearby tree.



Figure 6. A view of mud made home in lesser Cholistan. *Source:* Picture taken by researcher

2.14 Sources of Water in Cholistan

In Cholistan, human and animal life revolves around availability of water. Low precipitation, higher evaporation rate due to severe hot climate, lower water level from ground surface, absence of perennial streams are the clear reflections of paucity of water in Cholistan^{74, 75}. The estimated drinking water for both human and livestock population in Cholistan is 7 MCM. Ground water is available at the depth of 20 m from surface, but due to salinity, it is not potable⁷⁶.

Since 2005, four pipelines have laid in different areas of desert for the supply of drinking water. In Cholistan, there are no permanent surface water bodies. Besides this, high evaporation and high infiltration of water in sand prevents surface water to generate. In Cholistan, two sweet water belts have been discovered. One belt moves from Fort Abbas to

⁷⁴M. Akram, M. A. Kahlowan, and Z. A. Soomro, *Desertification Control for Sustainable Land Use in the Cholistan Desert, Pakistan*, ed. C. Lee and T. Schaaf, Future of Drylands (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008).18.

⁷⁵ FAO, "Pakistan, Cholistan Area Development Project."

⁷⁶M. Akram, "Rainwater Harvesting in Cholistan—a Success Story," *Pakistan Journal of Water Resources* 13, no. 2 (2009).2.

Fort Moj Garh 80 km long with width of 10 to 15 km. Its water volume is estimated ten billion in litter but it is deep from 40 to 100 meters from surface. Other centered in North West direction of fort Derawar covers 50 sq. km with depth of 25m⁷⁷.

There are five sources of water in Cholistan as given below.

2.14.1 Precipitation

It is the most important source of water in Cholistan. Major source of water in Cholistan is rainfall because underground water is saline in most of the areas⁷⁸. Average annual rainfall in Cholistan ranges from 100-200 mm in different parts, anyhow precipitation is not consistent and droughts are observed almost once in a decade⁷⁹. Other sources of water in Cholistan are dependent on rainfall such as *tobas* and *kunds*. Animal and human life is mainly dependent on rainfall for survival and sustainability. Although rainfall is very low in Cholistan but it is major source of life activities in Cholistan. Local people and livestock are dependent on vegetation for food and fodder. In the absence of any other source of irrigation, vegetation is also dependent on rainfall. Rainfall makes the local people happy and they wish and pray for rain in these words: *Meenh hoye taan rohi wasdi aye*. (When there is a rain, desert flourishes). People sing songs for seeking rain. A myth prevails in Cholistan that rain water is sacred and *pak* (permissible), therefore, there is no need to boil or filter it for drinking.

2.14.2 Toba

A *toba* is a big water pond constructed in natural depressions between the sand dunes. Being a desert area, Cholistan has scarcity of water, so local people store rain water

⁷⁷Naheed Zia Khan, Karamat Ali, and John R Anania, "Productivity Constraints of Cholistani Farmers," *The Pakistan Development Review* (1996).558.

⁷⁸Muhammad Akram, Muhammad Akram Kahlowan, and Zamir Ahmed Soomro, "Desertification Control for Sustainable Land Use in the Cholistan Desert, Pakistan," in *The Future of Drylands*(Springer, 2008).82.

⁷⁹Ibid. 6.

in man-made water storing pounds called *toba*. Mostly it is dug in the ground during depression area or between sand dunes so that maximum flowing water can be stored. This water is used for drinking by both human as well as by livestock. In Cholistan, population is scattered and inhabitations are settled around the *toba*. In most of the cases, *tobas* have been named after their owner⁸⁰. Many of the *tobas* are natural while others have been constructed by Cholistani people themselves. It is not only a water storage pond but also has some social aspects. A *toba* is base for settlement of human population and push-pull factor for migration in Cholistan. Mostly people belonging to one clan/caste settle around one *toba*. There is some distance between *toba* and settlement. People settled around one *toba* move only after the water is dried up. *Toba* is one of the main sources of water as it provides water to both human and livestock until it gets dried⁸¹.

A *toba* is considered to be property and ownership of the clan who constructed and look after for it. In the dry season, if any *toba* has still water or it is filled after rain fall in specific area, then other clans can come for drinking water from that particular *toba* but with the prior permission of the owning clan.

In the lesser Cholistan, there are some alternate sources of water like hand pumps and dug wells, therefore, households are also found at distance from *Toba*. Mostly *tobas* serve as source of water for both humans and animals in greater Cholistan whereas in lesser Cholistan, in some areas, there are separate *toba* for human population and livestock. In general, *tobas* are mostly open for people of same tribe settled around there. But if there is enough capacity of water storage, then two clans/castes do settle around one *toba*. In such cases, care and share of the *toba* becomes the joint responsibility of beneficiary clans.

⁸⁰Raza et al., "Ethno-Botanical Remedies Used by Pastoralists for the Treatment of Livestock Diseases in Cholistan Desert, Pakistan." 334.

⁸¹A Iqrar Khan, "*Cholistan: A Potential Resource for Agro-Livestock Development*," (2010).

Depth of water from ground surface is just 30-40 meter in Cholistan but with the exception of few places, underground water is brackish, therefore, Cholistani people need to depend on reservoir of rain water in the water ponds known as *toba*⁸². Currently, there are 1500 *toba*⁸³ in Cholistan, only one third have capacity for water storage whereas two third of them are non-functional and have never been desalted and exists only symbolically



Figure 7. View of *Toba* in Cholistan. *Source*: Picture taken by researcher

2.14.3 *Kund*

Kund, relatively small deep water ponds is constructed with local clay having cementing characteristics. It is round in shape with a lid on its top to minimise evaporation and entrance of foreign elements in it. There are small holes on upper side for making water flow smooth into the pond. *kund* has mostly width of 8-10 meters and 3-5 meters in depth⁸⁴. In most of the cases, every family possess a *kund* and use its water at the time of need. *Kunds* are situated at some distance from the *toba* and settlement. Water being stored into *kund* is used for human drinking. Although, it is pouted as insects and piece of grass can be seen inside the *kund*, yet it is one of the important source of sweet and clear water in Cholistan.

⁸²M Shabbir Baig, M Akram, and M Amjad Hassan, "Possibilities for Range Development in Cholistan Desert as Reflected by Its Physiography and Soils," *Pakistan Journal of Forestry* 30, no. 2 (1980).

⁸³Cholistan Development Authority, unpublished office record (2013)

⁸⁴Ibid.



Figure. 8. A view of *Kund*. Source: Picture taken by researcher during data collection

As compared to *toba*, *Kund* is smaller in size with cemented inner walls made of locally prepared cement. There is a lid at upper opening which ensures storage for longer duration as compared to *Toba*. *Kund* water is utilized only for drinking purpose especially for guests and children.

2.14.4 Dug Wells

Dug wells are permanent source of water in Cholistan but due to brackishness, water taken from wells is not potable. In the summer, when *toba* gets dry, then water from dug wells is taken out through a leather bucket tied with a rope. There are two ways to pull water out of well; men and women do it manually or camels are also used for pulling out water from well. When there is availability of water in the *toba* and *kund*, well is used only for animal drinking but in the dry season, people also use its water for drinking. Generally people do not know about the proper place for digging a well. In Cholistan Water is 70-90 feet deep on water table. Construction of a well involves life threat as well because digging in sand does not remain stable sometime. Most often, people have to dig it again when it

gets demolish⁸⁵. Generally every clan has their own dug well, therefore a larger number of dug wells are found near settlement.



Figure 9. A dug well in Cholistan. *Source:* Picture taken by researcher during data collection.

2.14.5 Tube Wells

As mentioned earlier, underground water is in depth from ground surface, so installation of tube wells is financially out of reach for already poor people of Cholistan. Therefore, CDA has installed few tube wells for provision of water for human and animal usage. Now there is also emerging trend to install tube well for irrigation purposes.

⁸⁵. Dar, *Sights in the Sands of Cholistan: Bahawalpur's History and Architecture*.

2.15.5 CDA Water Supply Scheme

CDA has a water supply scheme for provision of potable water for people and livestock in some areas of Cholistan. There is one main pipeline running with many outlets at different places. CDA has also constructed sheds and shelters for livestock near water points. Now, some of the families shift near these water points when other sources get scarce.

2.15.6 Hand Pumps

Hand pumps are found in lesser Cholistan in sweet water zones and are considered as blessing for the people in Cholistan. In the past, hand pumps were few, but presently especially in lesser Cholistan, hand pumps are found in many settlements. Mostly hand pumps have been installed with cooperation of CDA and NGOs working for the welfare of Cholistan.

2.16 Migration in Cholistan

Migration is an important aspect of life in Cholistan. This process is driven off by scarcity of water and fodder. Semi-nomadic people of Cholistan constantly keep moving from one place to another in search of water and forage for their livestock⁸⁶. Migration carried out in Cholistan is divided into two categories depending upon duration of migratory period; permanent migration from Cholistan to settled areas and temporary/seasonal migration within different areas of Cholistan in search of pasture.

Pastoralism is present here in form of pastoral, agro-pastoral, sedentary pastoralists, transhumant and desert nomads. Pastoral depend entirely on free fodder and self-regenerating range. Agro pastoral utilize agricultural farms fodder crops plants along with canal and roadside before pre-monsoon. Sedentary pastoralists live in permanent settlements are small farmers or tenant mostly use close area for grazing. Their animals can

⁸⁶Raza et al., "Ethno-Botanical Remedies Used by Pastoralists for the Treatment of Livestock Diseases in Cholistan Desert, Pakistan."p.334.

be said as stall-fed which come back in evening after grazing in surrounding mostly they have buffaloes and cattle with some goat and sheep. Transhumant is a type of people who make seasonal movement with their animals to irrigated areas and subsequently in the direction of desert. Livestock of desert nomads stayed in the desert throughout the year on water and fodder resources of desert make movement only within Cholistan. Mostly they wait for refilling of their *Toba*.⁸⁷

In greater Cholistan, there is massive trend of migration from one place to another within Cholistan. When a *toba* gets dry, people travel within Cholistan in search of other *tobas* and wells for getting access to water. In lesser Cholistan, one or the other source is water is available to the people and livestock throughout the year, so migration is driven by socio economic factors.

With first rain of monsoon, people start migration with their herds from settled areas to Cholistan. With monsoon rains, abundant vegetation invites dairy animals from urban and pre-urban areas of near about and pastorals also prefer to stay at their *tobas* in desert. Post monsoon is season of migration to semi-permanent settlements having wells whereas in spring season, people start migrating from Cholistan⁸⁸.

In greater Cholistan migration phenomenon is still present. People migrate from one *toba* to another to fulfil their water needs. Sometimes, they move towards CDA water supply points. Seasonal migration in Cholistan is found on massive level that also creates hurdles for education of children. Mostly people who migrate to urban areas do labourer work as they have no skills.

In lesser Cholistan, some people have migrated due to allotment of lands from Cholistan and outside of Cholistan. Some people migrate due to unavailability of various

⁸⁷ Akhter and Arshad, "Arid Rangelands in the Cholistan Desert (Pakistan)." p. 213-215.

⁸⁸ Shahzad Ashraf et al., "Prospective of Dairy Farming in Cholistan," *Science International* 25, no.2 (2013).

facilities like education, health, communication and electricity etc in the area. Similarly, some people also migrate to avail earning opportunities in other areas. Sometimes, they also get settled as one place as peasants. Moreover, they also work as labourers in agriculture⁸⁹.

The incentives for this movement include; in Irrigated areas, Cholistan people get some chances of temporary employment, wheat stubbles for their animal food and drinking water for people and animals. They become the labor force for the irrigated area and campsites of their livestock enhance fertility of fields⁹⁰.

Some families living in settled areas send their animals in greater Cholistan for grazing. Fodder is expensive for them because in settled areas, they have to cultivate or purchase it for their animals whereas animal grazing is free over the pastures of Cholistan. So in case of migration, such families left some of the male members behind in the greater Cholistan to take care of animals and rest of them move to settled areas.

Cholistanis believe that *Rohi* has some divine blessings within it, so everything here is blessed and living there is easy. Although they have more chances of earning in agriculture area where they can do labour work, sell milk and animal, whereas in greater Cholistan they can only sell animals and their skin. In desert, they have less income than irrigated areas but at the same time, for household management they need less expenditure.⁹¹

2.17 Animal Husbandry in Cholistan

In Cholistan, human survival is dependent on livestock in many ways; food, transportation and money, all is directly related with and dependent on animals. In the desert area, travelling and transportation is also dependent on camels and donkeys, so

⁸⁹Arshad and Nasir, "Comparison of Income and Expenditures of Nomads Pastoralists in Irrigated Areas and Desert Areas of Cholistan under Varying Environmental Conditions." 74.

⁹⁰M.A. Soharwardi, K. Ali, and M. Arshad, "Migration of Cholistan People from Desert Areas toward Irrigated Areas: Causes and Consequence (a Case Study of Cholistan, Pakistan)," *Migration* 1, no. 3 (2011).265.

⁹¹Ibid. 270.

people of Cholistan have great value for their animals. Being the only asset of Cholistanis, livestock has much significance in their social life as well. Animals like sheep, goat and camels are frequently exchanged and slaughtered on social events such as birth, wedding and death. About 1.2 million pastoral people are engaged with mobile livestock husbandry for food security and preservation of landscape and livestock⁹².

Total livestock population in Cholistan is about 1.560 millions. Out of which, 0.667 millions are cattles, 0.080 millions are camels, 0.350 millions are goats, 0.450 millions are sheep. Estimated milk production in Cholistan per day is about 250 tones and Cholistan area only is source of 50 % of total beef production in Punjab, Pakistan⁹³.

Human migration is dependent on scarcity of water and fodder of livestock. A place where water sources get dry, human population and livestock has to move towards another area in search of water. Stockbreeders along with animals stay for few months around the water resource and location of water resources is known to shepherds in the pastoralist societies⁹⁴.

In Cholistan, pattern of animal husbandry is different one area to another because of change in environmental conditions. In greater Cholistan, animal husbandry needs fewer efforts due to availability of free pastures. People set their animal free in the morning and they freely graze in the desert for the whole day. In the evening, all animals return back to their *tobas*. Herders only need to arrange drinking water, otherwise no special efforts are made to care for animal.

Every tribe has its own mark to identifying their animal. The distinctive mark made on body of an animal is called *Totum*. It helps them to identify animals if they lost in the

⁹²Raziq, de Verdier, and Younas, "Rapid Change of Strategy Is Necessary for Development of Dromedary Camel Pastoralism in the Cholistan Desert of Pakistan." 3

⁹³ Ashraf et al., "Prospective of Dairy Farming in Cholistan."345.

⁹⁴FAO, "Current Status of Genetic Resources, Recording And. Production Systems in African, Asian and American Camelids" (paper presented at the ICAR/FAO Sousee, Tunisia, 2004).22.

desert. There exists no fear of animal stealing in greater part of the desert. Camels sometimes graze for weeks in desert and then come back safely. If animals get lost, people search them in nearby settlements and identify them with the help of special mark carved on the body of animal. Similarly, herders tie a bell around the neck of their cows; its sound helps them to find location their animals from a certain distance.



Figure 10. Totum carved on the back leg of cow, view of cows under tree shade

Source: Picture taken by researcher during data collection

Pastoral nomadism is beneficial in two ways, firstly, it is sustainable mode of managing dry land of Cholistan and secondly, it meets national dairy requirements⁹⁵. Milk, whey, butter and meat are important part of food. At present, milk and butter is also sold in nearby markets for earning. Animal wool is used in preparation of handicrafts like blanket, *khes* and rug. Similarly, animals are sold for meeting financial needs of the family. In lesser Cholistan, people have more awareness about actual value of their animals and price, so they sell in markets and on special events like *Chanan Peer* festival whereas in greater Cholistan, animals are sold at poor prices.

⁹⁵ Ahmad, F., Gulzar, F., Shirazi, S. A., Farooq, S., & Ali, Z. (2005). Agro-pastoral systems in Cholistan. *Pakistan Geographical Review*, 60(2), 65-69. 125.

Over the last forty years, there is change in trend of animal husbandry especially in lesser Cholistan. Since there is cultivation in this area, so owner of herds need to stop them from going freely into agricultural fields of other people. Here animals cannot be left unattended because they can cause damage to the fields and crops of other people. Similarly, now women do not need to prepare butter because they sell their milk at milk collection center.

Nomads in Cholistan have animal husbandry as the major source of income; hence, they manage it for having maximum income by investing less. They keep their milking cows near urban settlements for getting good price of milk and butter; on the other hand non milking animals are kept in desert for grazing that has no cost except the expenditures on shepherd.

2.18 Characteristics of Soil and Flora in Cholistan

Soil and plants of an area have influence on one another; plants are organic part of soil so change in vegetation brings change in soil. In Cholistan, soil does not support vegetation because it is in form of thick layer and lacking humidity. In south area of Cholistan, sand dunes are very lengthy and wide with yellowish and pale brown colour of sand. This loamy textured sand has plant and animal matter in it. Desert soils is reddish in colour and due to hot and dry climates, there is some grass and few shrubs⁹⁶.

Vegetation in Cholistan is typical of arid region, which have adaptability with extreme environmental conditions and moisture fluctuation. As in the eastern region of Cholistan (lesser Cholistan), average rainfall is higher than southern region (greater Cholistan), so vegetation cover is better here. Chemical composition and soil topography plays important role in the distribution of vegetation. The existence of certain plant species at defined places is common. In the Cholistan, a number of different plant species and soil

⁹⁶Basit Karim et al., "Effect of the Canopy Cover on the Organic and Inorganic Content of Soil in Cholistan Desert," *Pakistan Journal of Botany* 41, no. 5 (2009).2387- 2388.

types are known, the soil of Cholistan is classified into six communities having specific characteristics for the growth of vegetation⁹⁷. Some shrubs are with medicinal characteristics, which are used for treatment of various diseases. One such vegetation is *Launnea nudicaulis* (Roxb) locally called *Jangli booti*, milky material of this shrub is used for relieving constipation. Its leaves are given as anti-fever to children, for the treatment of cuts, skin diseases, swelling, itches and bilious fever. Its roots are used for toothache. Another shrub being used for the treatment is *Launnea resedifolia* (Linn), it is found at the top of sand dunes and or in the area between two dunes⁹⁸.

2.19 Life Style in Cholistan

In the greater Cholistan, daily life starts right before sun rise as people get up early in the morning. In the animal herder families, men drive their animals for grazing and women start their domestic chores like churning milk and fetching water. Best time for fetching water from *tobas* or well is early morning or in the afternoon when sunshine is relatively tolerable. Shepherds make their animals stay under the shades of trees or CDA sheds in the noon to avoid scorching heat, whereas rest of family members stay at home and avoid moving outside during peak hours of sunshine in the summer season.

Usually in the morning, women preferably mothers prepare chapattis more than needed for one time meal of the family and remaining one are used for the second meal. After some time of sun rise, meal is taken which serves as breakfast and lunch whereas dinner is taken with the sun set. All the family members sit together for taking meal except those who are out for grazing herds. In the evening, there is arrival of grazing animals from all sides of *toba* where milking animals are milked.

⁹⁷M. Arshad et al., "Edaphic Factors and Distribution of Vegetation in the Cholistan Desert, Pakistan," *Pak. J. Bot* 40, no. 5 (2008).1923.

⁹⁸S. Rashid et al., "Antibacterial and Antifungal Activities of *Launaea Nudicaulis* (Roxb.) and *Launaea Resedifolia* (Linn.)," *Pakistan Journal of Biological Sciences* 3, no. 4 (2000).630.

In the greater Cholistan, due to scarcity of water, taking bath and changing clothes is usually fortnightly or when they feel its need. After washing, clothes are folded and buried in the sand. It sucks water leaving the clothes dry, whereas smooth folding serves as ironing. Utensils used on daily basis are not washed with water; some sand is poured in the pot which makes it clean by rubbing.

In the lesser Cholistan areas, daily activities also start before sunrise. In the normal days, females get busy in domestic chores i-e cleaning, cooking, washing and animal care whereas men go for outdoor activities like grazing, collecting fodder and working in the fields for their crops. During wheat and cotton harvesting season, both men and women go to the fields and work there for the day long. Many people go as wage labourer in the fields of the settled area farmers. In the summer season, except in the harvesting days, people do stay at home for avoiding severe heat. Meal is taken twice but in some cases there is also practice of lunch, otherwise there is heavy breakfast followed by dinner in the evening.



Figure 11. A view of Life Style in Cholistan. *Source:* Picture taken by researcher during field work

2.20 Social Organization in Cholistan

In Cholistan, social organization revolves around family and kinship and there is no concept of formal social organization. Nomads in the Cholistan have informal ethical codes which regulate the use of land territories and water points such as *tobas* and *kunds*⁹⁹. Social organization in Cholistan is based on strong kinship. The hutments of nomads indicate that they are living under extending family system on the basis of agnate groups. Due to scarcity of water, an agnatic group altogether moves in search of water and fodder and settles there where they can find water source¹⁰⁰.

People are always identified by their castes like Sheikh, Parhar and Mahar. Commonly a prefix or suffix is used with name of men but sometimes both prefix and suffix are used with the names which are mostly comprised of their family name, tribe name, caste, tribe or religious (like Haji) identification such as Ray Muhammad Shareef Parehaar, Ra Hassan Daha, Hakeem Khan Baloch, Abdul Rahman Naych and Mahar Lateef etc.

Generally, youngster females do not use prefix or suffix with their names like Saki, Jamo, Nasiban. In mature age, a suffix is used with the name of women such as *Mai* (used mostly for calling an elderly woman) especially during a formal introduction.

In Cholistan, reason for lack of formal social organization is poor awareness about it. Population is divided into minor and major social groups like family, tribe and castes. Social structure is quite simple and has its roots in family and tribe, so formal and large organizations are out of question. There are some informal groups with the division of responsibilities.

In Cholistan, caste determines a number of things such as living standards and orchestrating the marriages. There is always a group of the families within the same caste

⁹⁹ Akhter and Arshad, "Arid Rangelands in the Cholistan Desert (Pakistan)."

¹⁰⁰ Bridget Allchin, *Living Traditions: Studies in the Ethnoarchaeology of South Asia* (Oxbow Books, 1994).56.

living around one *toba*. Usually, a *toba* is used by one or two castes, but in case, if there are two castes living together, there is a notable difference in the settlements.

Social stratification is present in the form of castes, tribes, professions and particularly on the basis of religion. Muslims and Hindus are strongly identifiable groups. Likewise, certain families like Numbardar, Sayyeds, Nazim, Chaudhry, Meher, and Perhear are more respectable in the Cholistan. Members of financially well off families are always respected by the common people. Jats, Rajputs and Baluchis that forms the current population of Cholistan have Scythian and Aryan ancestry. They have many common traits and are divided into further steps and are liked to be called by these steps like Warraich, Rathore, Leghari, Lashari, Janjua, Cchatta, Cheema, Dashti Bhatti, etc. Saiyyad families came from Bagdad and Bukhara in Uch and become torch barrier of Islam while Abbasids of Bahawalpur became powerful by ruling these clans. They encouraged Baluchis, Khosas, Machis, Samas, Chachars, Rinds, Jatois, Kurias and Nutkanis to settle in Bahawalpur. Many Pathan families of Punjab like Saddozais, the Khakwanis, Popalzais Ghoriehe, Babars, and many Sayyed and Qurashi families settled into Cholistan to save honour from Sikhs in the ruling period of Ranjit Singh¹⁰¹.

Personal identity and fame is attached with families in Cholistan; if a person belongs to noble family, he/she will also be considered as noble and pious. If the family is not considered the respected one, even personal good character and deed cannot earn good name for that person. That is why people of Cholistan can go to any extent on the name of family honour. In Cholistan families are recognized by their castes and for Cholistani people, caste is the source of identification and pride.

In Cholistan social order is maintained through *numberdar* (village headman). He has a significant role in all social matters within his caste. In all social events, *numberdar* is

¹⁰¹ Auj, *Cholistan: Land and People*. p. 49-50.

given special respect and regard. In case of any conflict, he is called for intervention in the matter where he serves as arbitrator. When there is conflict between two castes, *numberdars* of both sides come forward and settle the issue.

People of Cholistan prefer to live in the form of groups in both cases, either they stay inside Cholistan or migrate in settled areas. This is reason for being their centuries old traditions of living together in group form where they feel comfortable with their own people.

2.21 Institutions Contributing Towards Social Change in Cholistan

It is established fact that all the societies keep changing permanently irrespective of their current stage of development. Change is caused by various factors in different societies at different pace. Different factors like geography, climate, migration, change in the size of population, sources of communication and transportation are driving forces for social change. Cholistan is also affected by social change, although the nature and pace of social change is different from that of the urban areas. A brief description of different institutions playing effective role in social change of Cholistan is being presented.

2.21.1 Cholistan Development Authority (CDA)

Government of Punjab established CDA in 1976 with the objectives of refining uncultivated land for cultivation and provision of drinking water for both human and animal. Along with the establishment of *Chaks* (settlement) and towns, construction of roads, construction of livestock farms, dairy farms, sheep farms, facilities for entrepreneurship and promotion of Cholistani crafts. Moreover, research on wild life and shrubs of Cholistan, exploration of minerals and contract for the leasing of land in Cholistan areas were the broader objectives. CDA spends capital on searching sweet water points, sinking wells, providing communicational, educational facilities, promoting tourism and to

undertake all such functions assigned by Government¹⁰². Under CDA, the ongoing projects includes the construction of roads, school buildings, basic health units, digging wells where drinkable water is available, constructions of *kunds* (water storage well), turbines and provision of electricity to seventy one (71) villages¹⁰³.

2.21.2 Cholistan Institute of Desert Studies (CIDS)

An arid research center named as Cholistan Institute of Desert Studies (hereafter, CIDS) has been established by the The Islamia University of Bahawalpur. This institute has its focus on three aspects: i) Physical science division is responsible for solar and wind energy etc. ii) The biological science division conducts research on ways for management and improvement of rangeland. iii) The socio-economic division aims at transforming technology developed at CIDS to people of Cholistan and work for boosting local home based industry of wool and mat¹⁰⁴.

2.21.3 International NGOs

Some of international Non-Governmental Organizations have launched developmental projects in Cholistan with collaboration of local public and private organizations. A brief detail is as given under.

i) Cholistan Area Development Project (CADP): Cholistan Area Development Project has been financially supported by the international donors for the development of desert. Food and Agricultural Organization of United Nations and Asian Development Bank (ADB) are supporting for the development of the area. Some of the projects have done studies such as Socio-Economic and Production Systems Study (SEPSS) and an Initial

¹⁰² A Nadeem, *Rohi Ke Khadokhal : Cholistan Development Authority Act 1976 or Kuch Haqayaq* : (Rahim Yar Khan: Action Aid International. , 2007). 400-401.

¹⁰³ Dure-Sameen Naqvi, *Chlistan: Tareekh Ke Ayna Main* (Multan: Sohni Dharti, 2003). 224-225.

¹⁰⁴ Bakhsh, R. On the Brink. In M. Arif (Ed.), *Cholistan Shifting Land*. (Saraiki Adbi Board, Multan , 2000).

Environmental Evaluation (IEE).CADP has wide range objectives for the development of Cholistan¹⁰⁵.

ii) Bahawalpur Rural Development Project (BRDP): Bahawalpur Rural Development Project was designed for development of Bahawalpur division. Major projects include construction of rural roads, provision of electricity, lining and improvement of water channels¹⁰⁶. Cholistan area, being part of Bahawalpur division, is also a beneficiary of BRDP.

2.21.4 Local Government Departments and NGOs

Local governments of three districts (Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur and Rahim Yar Khan), local NGOs, National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) and Punjab Rural Support Programme (PRSP) are running some developmental projects in the Cholistan. These interventions include facilities for education, literacy, human and livestock health but these facilities are limited to lesser Cholistan areas only. Due to tough geographical conditions, Greater Cholistan is hardly accessible by public and private agencies for carrying out any developmental activity.

2.21.5 Arab Sheikhs

Rulers of Gulf States like Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Qatar pay a yearly visit to Cholistan for hunting. Additionally, they also contribute for development in construction of schools, roads, wells and *kunds*. Construction and maintenance of the solar pumps, wind mills and diesel engine for pumping water in Rahim Yar Khan are examples of their developmental contributions. Free veterinary dispensary for pastoralists comprised of 4150

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid p.6

acres, a wildlife sanctuary and an international airport for Rahim Yar Khan are also worth mentioning¹⁰⁷.

2.21.6 Effects of Social Change in Cholistan

With the introduction of various developmental techniques and technological interventions, Cholistan has witnessed social change. Due to difference in accessibility, the pace of change is also diverse in different areas of Cholistan. The description of change caused with the passage of time is discussed below.

As a result of canal colonization project, local population known as „*Rohilas*“ has been replaced by settlers from upper and central Punjab. This settlement effected the permanent inhabitant which can be seen clear. For instance, in semi-permanent settlements, the roof is now flat instead of thatched one that used to be in the past¹⁰⁸. Transportational use of camel has decreased resulting in the decrease of its population which has fallen to 1% of total animals in 2006 as compared to 5.7% in the previous years¹⁰⁹.

Nomadic population of Cholistan is getting settled near agriculture lands. This shift from nomadic to agriculture has observed many changes. Farming requires hard work from people. A settled agrarian society is emerged which in turn resulted in the markets and towns. Now, Cholistan is a blend of inhabitants speaking many languages with the variation of political and economic interests by different ethnic groups. The induction of settlers into region has resulted into different conflicts such as ethnic and linguistic conflict. It has also affected the culture of Cholistan.

¹⁰⁷ U Farooq, M Iqbal, and M Ahmad, "Livestock Farming in Cholistan Desert of Pakistan: Setting the Development Strategies," *Annals of Arid Zone* 46, no. 2 (2007).5-6.

¹⁰⁸ M. Kamil Khan, "Rural Islam and Change: Case Study: Cholistan," *Habitat International* 7, no. 3-4 (1983). 165-184.

¹⁰⁹ Ali, Chaudhry, and Farooq, "Camel Rearing in Cholistan Desert of Pakistan."

The arrival of settlers (locally called *abadkar*) has outnumbered the *Saraiki* language. District Bahwanagar has become entirely a settler's area, In Rahim Yar Khan, Ariyan, a newly settled caste is dominating over locals in all aspects. Similarly tehsil Yazman of Bahawalpur is hosting about 13000 settlers' families. This change in population has influenced local politics and influential locals are losing their seats in elections. Politicians exploit ethnic sentiments and provoke differences among the masses. This is why saraiki nationalists have started allotment of land to local people and local people are familiar with the notions such as protests and basic rights etc¹¹⁰.

There is difference of opinion about the different options of development in Cholistan. One is provision of agricultural facilities for boosting the agriculture activities. Other is about preservation of nomadic life style and the animal husbandry should be remains as a key source of income. Cholistan is turning into desert due to lack of availability of water. According to a report, 70 percent of area of Din Garh and 87 percent of Fort Abbas has turned into a barren land. Experts say that there are several factors of this desertification such as overgrazing due to increased number of livestock and land erosion due to winds and salinity are among the major factors contributing to this situation. Anyhow, many opine that increased number of human settlements is the major cause of this degradation of desert not over grazing¹¹¹.

¹¹⁰ Arif, M. Cholistan Shifting Lands.: (Saraiki Adbi Board, Multan , 2000).

¹¹¹ Arif, M. Cholistan Shifting Lands.: (Saraiki Adbi Board, Multan , 2000).

3. Chapter-III: Literature Review

This chapter discusses literature generally on nomads around the world and specifically on Cholistan with special reference to social institutions in nomadic societies.

Nomadism exists since ages in the whole world sporadically but particularly, in the sandy deserts. Nomadic people keep moving from one place to another in search of water and fodder because most of them live in desert areas. Certain factors like nature of economic activities, isolation from the external world, lack of basic facilities, practice of tribal culture and extreme geographical circumstances makes the nomadic people's living different from that of settled areas. Therefore, phenomenon of social change and role of social institutions in the overall nomadic life is different from the settled areas. The current study is aimed to investigate the process of social change, changing functions of women in various social institutions and ethnography of nomads living in the Cholistan desert of Pakistan.

The current chapter discusses the available research conducted on nomads and the functions of different functional social institutions and particularly, within these social institutions, it will unfold the contemporary role and status of women. Moreover, it will explore the nature of economic activities, health-care facilities, religious practices, marriage practices, animal husbandry, migration and social organization specifically focusing on women. This will explore the current roles of women and the statuses they enjoy and contemporary changes occurred in their role and status in the nomadic society. Further, this will help to build the base of the current study by exploring the above mentioned changes all-over the world in nomadic societies and answer our basic research question investigating about the induced changes on the role of women in Cholistan. In addition, various examples from different nomadic societies showing similarities and differences will help to compare it with our own selected study area, Cholistan.

3.1 Concepts Related to Nomadism

Nomad refers to a person who is solely dependent on livestock and never grows crops, obtains food either directly from animals or their sale¹¹². Nomadism denotes movement of people from one place to another in search of water and fodder¹¹³. Pastoralism is defined as livelihood based on raising animals, it can be adopted by both settled and nomadic people¹¹⁴. Nomadic pastoralism denotes totally depending on livestock for livelihood and constant mobility from one place to another¹¹⁵. Agro pastoralism denotes a situation when a person grows enough crops for satisfaction of grain needs but yet livestock are valuable asset, herd size is smaller than pastoral nomad and avail limited pastures¹¹⁶.

Transhumance refers to regular movement from one place to another for utilizing pastures; similarly transhumant is a person who has permanent farmhouse where elderly of the family stay¹¹⁷. Sedentarization refers to settlement of nomads and adoption of cultivation on small farms either their own or work as tenants¹¹⁸.

3.2 Existence of Nomads

Nomadism holds an important position in the human history. Archaeologists agree that 99% of human history revolves around nomadism. There is prominent role of nomads in various cultures around the world for last 10,000 years though it is not documented¹¹⁹.

¹¹²Roger Blench, *'You Can't Go Home Again': Pastoralism in the New Millennium*(Overseas Development Institute London, 2001).11.

¹¹³Esther Schelling, "Human and Animal Health in Nomadic Pastoralist of Chad: Zoonoses, Morbidity and Health Services" (University of Basel, 2002).2.

¹¹⁴Ibid

¹¹⁵Ibid

¹¹⁶Blench, *'You Can't Go Home Again': Pastoralism in the New Millennium*.13.

¹¹⁷Ibid.p.12

¹¹⁸Akhter and Arshad, "Arid Rangelands in the Cholistan Desert (Pakistan)."p.212

¹¹⁹Steadman Upham, "Nomads of the Desert West: A Shifting Continuum in Prehistory," *Journal of World Prehistory* 8, no. 2 (1994).116.

Generally, nomads are considered as people moving from one place to other along with their herds. Pastoralism exists since ancient times and nomads have managed to sustain despite the challenging environments. Nomads are a notable minority living in isolation with a distinct culture feebly understood creating a myth about social life but they are positively contributing towards the sustainability of environment in deserts and national economy. Likely, their contribution in meeting national dairy and meat needs is also notable¹²⁰.

Nomads are living in different regions of the world with different geographic and climatic conditions like nomads of Tibetan Plateau live on elevation of about 3500 meters above sea-level where mountains are lush green with the rain-fall throughout the year suitable for animals grazing. Contrarily, nomads living in other parts of the world like in Cholistan of Pakistan, the study are of current research are facing scarcity of water and fodder¹²¹.

3.3 Economic Activities in Nomadic Societies

Generally, economy of desert people revolves around livestock, so is the case with Cholistan. Among the animals, cattles, camels, goats and sheep are brought up for fulfilling the financial needs. Either these animals or their products such as milk and butterfat are sold for earning. But with the increased dairy activities, there is nomadic-sedentary conflict based on the access to available resources¹²². Same is the case with the nomadic people of Rajhistan desert, India as they are also dependent on animal husbandry for their livelihood. Herding sheep and goats provide them food and money for purchasing basic amenities of

¹²⁰Arshad and Nasir, "Comparison of Income and Expenditures of Nomads Pastoralists in Irrigated Areas and Desert Areas of Cholistan under Varying Environmental Conditions."492.

¹²¹Daniel J Miller, "Normads of the Tibetan Plateau Rangelands in Western China. Part Three. Pastoral Development and Future Challenges," *Rangelands Archives* 21, no. 2 (1999).17-20.

¹²²Ahmad, "Agro-Pastoral Systems in Cholistan."65-69.

life and same nomadic-sedentary conflict based on limited resources is also observed¹²³.

Likely, the economy of Sudanese Ahmada pastoralists is mainly dependent upon rearing of animals and partly on rain-fed agriculture.

Now, if we specifically discuss the economic activities of women and how they are changed with the passage of time, the literature notifies that in nomadic societies all over the world, females start to work at the age of 5-6 years, along with carrying out routine domestic chores. Women equally contribute in economic activities with men like take-care of animals, making handicrafts, milking and preparing milk products. This is notable that women of nomadic societies spend more time in working than men. This is an established norm that if a man have many adult sons, he will not work and prefer to limit himself to decision making but contrarily, women work throughout their lives¹²⁴.

Nomads share their labour work by forming co-operative herding. They share labour and care for the herds on alternate basis. Like Cholistan, in Kenya, during dry season and grazing, nomads divide their herds into five categories as milking animals, small stocks, calves, lambs and kettles. Among them, 21 % of animals are managed by households including women; borrowed labour manages 27% of herds while remaining 50 % are managed on exchange basis by the whole settlement. Women are equally active and play their progressive role from milking the animals to performing daily chores¹²⁵.

¹²³United Nations World Food Programme, "Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Profile of Rajasthan,"(UNWFP, 2001).

¹²⁴Barbara Casciarri, "The Role of Women in the Changing Family and Social Organization of Ahâmda Pastoralists (Central Sudan)," *Nomadic Peoples*, no. 36-37 (1995). 105-118.

¹²⁵Marius Warg Næss, "Cooperative Pastoral Production: Reconceptualizing the Relationship between Pastoral Labor and Production," *American Anthropologist* 114, no. 2 (2012).

Nomads in African countries take help from their close relatives in animal herding. Many pastoralist families live under nuclear family system making it impossible to manage herding independently¹²⁶.

Like other nomadic societies of Kenya, India and Iran, there exists an important relationship between rainfall and financial conditions of nomads settled in Cholistan. If there is sufficient rainfall, nomads do not need to migrate to the settled areas and can save expenditures incurred on fodder in the migratory period. Further, as these people are not skilled, therefore, job opportunities are restricted to labour work in the farms of settlers¹²⁷.

In Cholistan, the financial conditions of nomads in terms of monetary standards cannot be judged as most of the capital the nomadic people own is in the form of animals and precious jewelry. The same standards go with the other nomadic societies. For instance, in Africa, to measure the level of poverty in the nomads, general poverty indicators were applied based on monetary standards. It was found that nomads were deficient of liquidity however; their financial assets in the form of animals were much higher than the normal poor classes¹²⁸.

Similarly, Raen Nomads of Iran, like people of greater Cholistan, are scattered in different desert regions, migrates between pastures and have poor linkages with markets for selling their dairy products and animals¹²⁹. Contrary to that, Tuareg nomads of Africa like people of lesser Cholistan raise more animals than their need as a part of their economic strategy. As they have to move throughout the year, they sell animals to the farmers of settled

¹²⁶ Gudrun Dahl, "Production in Pastoral Societies in the Future of Pastoral Peoples" (Nairobi, Kenya 4-8 August, 1980 1981).

¹²⁷ Akhter and Arshad, "Arid Rangelands in the Cholistan Desert (Pakistan)."

¹²⁸ Yacob Aklilu and Andy Catley, "Livestock Exports from the Horn of Africa: An Analysis of Benefits by Pastoralist Wealth Group and Policy Implications," *Report commissioned by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) under the Livestock Policy Initiative of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)* (2009).4.

¹²⁹ Hamid R Ansari-Renani et al., "Nomadic Pastoralism in Southern Iran," *Pastoralism* 3, no. 1 (2013).2.

areas to meet their expenditures¹³⁰. In all these economics settings, the literature notes that women are playing the central role in economic activities. Unlikely, the women of settled areas, they not only perform house-hold chores but also take part in economic activities as an active member.

3.4 Health: Care and Problems in Nomadic Societies

The healthy conditions of nomadic people are not up to the mark and generally all the nomadic people of the world have common diseases such as tuberculosis, lungs infections, digestive dysfunctions and diseases resulting from unsafe sex¹³¹. Nomadic population has lesser access to health facilities reason being their remote geographical locations¹³², linguistic barriers and political differences¹³³.

The situation can be identified with the fact that in the Thar desert of India, 70 % of the nomads were unaware of the government hospital near their camp, 69 % of them visited hospitals in case of serious health problems. Like the women of Cholistan, the health conditions of women are even worsening, as the study found out that 63 % of nomad women in Thar Desert of India deliver at home¹³⁴ leading them towards serious life threats.

Similarly, like greater Cholistan of Pakistan, the Rajhistan desert of India is among the most backward areas where health facilities are obsolete. Due to poor socio-economic marginalization of the people, health care facilities are non-existent and desert people do not afford to spend on health and just concerns about water, food and forage that makes the life

¹³⁰Jon Pedersen and Tor A Benjaminsen, "Food Security and Pastoralism in the Northern Sahel," in *Human Ecology*(Springer, 2010). 175.

¹³¹Schelling, "Human and Animal Health in Nomadic Pastoralist of Chad: Zoonoses, Morbidity and Health Services." 16–25.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Sixten SR Haraldson, "Reflections on Nomadic and Scattered Populations," *Journal of community health* 19, no. 5 (1994). 303.

¹³⁴Bandana Sachdev, "Perspectives on Health, Health Needs and Health Care Services among Select Nomad Tribal Populations of Rajasthan, India," *Medical Anthropology* 73.p.75-79

of women even more wretched. In addition, lack of education and unawareness further deteriorate the health¹³⁵.

Like greater Cholistan, Rajhistan state lacks basic health facilities. Poverty coupled with poor roads infrastructure and transportation facilities. Local people have only choice to visit non-qualified persons for treatment. Some local people have knowledge about the medicinal effects of local herbs. Therefore in case of any disease, firstly herbs are given for relief. Many times, the patient is carried for *Jhar phonk* (spiritual treatment like saying sacred spell over the patient) for getting relief from the disease. If there is no betterment after these practices and disease is getting serious, the patient is taken to doctor. These life threatening practices are making the lives of women even more miserable¹³⁶. If we mention Cholistan, the study area of current research, there is only small number of health care centres. Due to severe environmental conditions, the social infrastructure in the desert areas is very meagre negatively affecting the health condition of local people particularly that of women

Now, the questions arise about the efforts of governments to provide health facilities to these nomads. The state administration of the Rajhistan, India admit that desert people are facing number of issues regarding health like discrimination on gender basis, accessibility of health centres, lack of facilities at health units, inefficiency of facilities and financial inability of the nomads to avail the available facilities. Particularly, women in the desert area are forced to depend on the quacks for their health related problems reason being unavailability of doctors and high cost of cure. In addition, health issues of women are not given due importance, so, most of them are not allowed to see the doctor unless the prior consent of head male members. In Rajhistan, like greater Cholistan, transport system is poor

¹³⁵Parakash Tyagi, "Making Health a Reality for Thar Desert Communities of India,"(USA: Fleishman Fellow, Terry Sandford Institute of Public Policy, Duke University, 2004).3.

¹³⁶World Food Programme, "Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Profile of Rajhistan." (2001)

that make it more difficult to reach the health centre¹³⁷. This problem urges the people to be dependent on local available health facilities. Socio-economic factors such as religion, education, age, income and occupation have a very strong relationship with health care in the Cholistan desert. The available international literature also investigates the same for other nomadic societies.

For example in Rajhistan desert of India, Hindus and Muslims go to quacks while Sikhs mostly visit private health centres for cure. 8.3% of desert people, living with joint family system visit qualified doctors while a reverse relationship is found between education and visit to quacks. A relationship between occupation and access to health care services is also observed. Desert people serving in below jobs such as farming, agriculture, labour work and construction reflecting their poor socio-economic status depends on local available health facilities¹³⁸.

Thar Desert of Rajhistan is also a home to 23 million people but like Cholistan, certain factors like frequent droughts, shortage of potable water and food; it is one of the most under developed region where 43% of population is deprived of basic health facilities¹³⁹. But people of Cholistan are safer against the diseases such as pneumonia. Same goes with the nomads of South Africa, where a research established that nomadic population faces less common infections such as pneumonia and diarrhea as compared to population living in urban and settled areas of South Africa¹⁴⁰.

On the other hand, majority of nomad Gujjars in Udhampur and Kangra district of India suffer from many diseases of lungs, Gastro, Tuberculosis, Pneumonia and skin. Poor

¹³⁷Alok Chauhan Singh, "High Dependency on Quacks—Is There a Gap in the Public Health Care Delivery System? Reflections from a District Located in the Thar Desert (India)," *Consilience-The Journal of Sustainable Development* 8, no. 1 (2012). 136-141.

¹³⁸Ibid.136-141.

¹³⁹Prakash Tyagi, "Providing Healthcare to Older People in the Thar Desert, India," *Journal of Aging in Emerging Economies* (n.d). 2-5.

¹⁴⁰Hill AG, *Population, Health and Nutrition in the Sahil*(London: Routledge and Kegan Paul., 1985).

socio-economic and hygienic conditions are the major factors contributing to this situation¹⁴¹. Likewise Gujjar and Bakerwal women in Azad and Jamu Kashmir of India face severe health problems due to certain biological, social and economic factors like early marriage, high fertility rate, poor diet, excessive and hard physical work, domestic violence, believe in superstitions, extreme poverty, cultural restrictions for women, illiteracy and lack of awareness about health problem and available facilities for women. Nomadic women in these tribes are living a miserable life due to poor health¹⁴².

Health of nomads in Cholistan and other region is highly influenced by their living conditions. As livestock is major source of livelihood for them and they stay closer to the animals, therefore, communicable diseases may transfer from animals to humans during their physical contact. Hence, their life style of nomads affects their health¹⁴³.

For many decades, the socio-economic conditions of the nomads of all over world are in transition. The literature suggests prioritizing health care for nomads since they are living in traditional life style while rest of the world is benefitting with high technology¹⁴⁴.

Health care facilities in Cholistan are based on gender discrimination. A pregnant woman gets traditional treatment from woman quack. In case of sever health issue, consent of men are solicited to visit doctor. Same is the case in Chad, where, if a nomadic woman needs health treatment which is not available at home, her visit to a physician entirely depends upon the social support of male members like father, husband and male children. Common health

¹⁴¹Virender Koundal, "Poverty among Nomadic Gujjars—a Case Study of J & K and Hp," *International Journal Of Marketing, Financial Services & Management Research Vol. 1 Issue 8, August 2012, ISSN 2277 3622(2012)*.209.

¹⁴²Showkeen Bilal Ahmad Gul, "Assessment and Understanding of Gujjar and Bakerwal Women's Health in Jammu and Kashmir," *Journal Of Business Management & Social Sciences Research* 3, no. 3 (2014).38.

¹⁴³Schelling, "Human and Animal Health in Nomadic Pastoralist of Chad: Zoonoses, Morbidity and Health Services."

¹⁴⁴Jacob Zinsstag, M Ould Taleb, and PS Craig, "Editorial: Health of Nomadic Pastoralists: New Approaches Towards Equity Effectiveness," *Tropical Medicine & International Health* 11, no. 5 (2006).567.

problems such as pregnancy are dealt at home but in case of serious ailment, a wife is not supposed to share her health problems with husband for the avoidance of embarrassment¹⁴⁵.

In some cases, a very different experiences was also observed in Kenya where Nomads Turkana were healthier than the settled Turkana despite that fact that settled Turkana has a better facilities of food and Medicare. Common diseases found were cold and cough while major health problems were eye and chest infections¹⁴⁶. Nomads of Africa faced health problems during the migration period. For example, Pastoralists migrate to the find water resources or settled farms. Usually, families of nomads are found near settled area when there is scarcity of water. As these locations are near animal farms and breeding places that spread infections in nomads¹⁴⁷.

3.5 Education in Nomadic Societies

Education and socio-economic conditions of the nomads of Cholistan are interrelated. For instance, during economic recession, different strategies are adopted for survival including applying cut short on education expenditures¹⁴⁸. Like Cholistan, there are other socio-economic factors which adversely influenced the education of nomadic children especially females in Rajhistan. It was investigated that nomadic people willing to send their kids to school but only few could get education. The reason was that even with primary level education, nomads gave up herding and animal husbandry and preferred to

¹⁴⁵Kate Hampshire, "Networks of Nomads: Negotiating Access to Health Resources among Pastoralist Women in Chad," *Social science & medicine* 54, no. 7 (2002).

¹⁴⁶Nanette L Barkey, Benjamin C Campbell, and Paul W Leslie, "A Comparison of Health Complaints of Settled and Nomadic Turkana Men," *Medical anthropology quarterly* 15, no. 3 (2001).404.

¹⁴⁷ Abdikarim Sheik-Mohamed and Johan P Velema, "Where Health Care Has No Access: The Nomadic Populations of Sub-Saharan Africa," *Tropical medicine & international health* 4, no. 10 (1999). 700.

¹⁴⁸Mariam Abbas Soharwardi et al., "A Descriptive Analysis of Household Strategies of Nomad Pastoralists under Ecological Stress: (a Case Study of Cholistan Desert) " *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research* 4, no. 12 (2013).224.

seek job anywhere else. There were many examples when girls in Raika nomads refused to marry a literate fiancée because only herding was considered as an ideal career for them¹⁴⁹.

The literature suggests that education for the nomads must be different from that of settled and urban areas. It is suggested by some scholars that it must be flexible, multidimensional and should address specific problem of nomads that includes social, economic and political marginalization¹⁵⁰. Like lesser Cholistan, many areas of Rajasthan desert in India have educational facilities but they do not avail them because of the firm believe that education has no link in raising ones income. Therefore, it is suggested that nomads should be imparted with education related to nomadic life and livestock production because they contribute significantly in land and livestock production

This sort of technical education, as an agent of change, will change the beliefs and attitude of nomads. Further, it can bring socio-economic change in nomads as they would be more productive in term of livestock and farming¹⁵¹. Education of children especially women education in Cholistan is a big challenge but this is not limited to nomadic society of Pakistan only. For instance, program of nomad education in twenty East African countries met failure reason being the lack of trust and fear on the part nomadic parents and elders about the after effects of education on children life. Nomads that also include the Cholistan people believe that after getting education, children would abandon traditional culture and life style and may give up nomadic life. It was suggested that these fears can be overcome by adopting non-formal and distance schooling system, as children getting education under non formal system would not be needed to stay away from home and

¹⁴⁹Vijay Paul Sharma, Ilse Köhler-Rollefson, and John Morton, "Pastoralism in India: A Scoping Study," *Indian Institute of Management and League of Pastoral Peoples, Ahmedabad, India and Ober-Ramstadt, Germany* 236(2003).36.

¹⁵⁰Saverio Krätli, *Education Provision to Nomadic Pastoralists*(Institute of Development Studies (IDS), 2001).1.

¹⁵¹Roy Carr-Hill and Edwina Peart, "The Education of Nomadic Peoples in East Africa: Review of Relevant Literature," (2005).p. 17.

giving up herding and other nomadic practices¹⁵². This suggestion can also be useful in context of providing education to the women of Cholistan. This is also notable that nomads define objectives of education differently but the suggested techniques of education will not only provide new knowledge about farming etc but in longer run will develop a national vision. For example, in Sudan, it is established that education would develop a national vision, making the nomadic people more aware about their responsibilities as the citizen having certain rights and duties which resultantly will make them more productive for themselves and their country¹⁵³.

A group of nomads in Kenya was consulted for seeking their views on education, its curriculum and mode of delivery. Nomads were in the favor of educating their children but there were certain reservation on the curriculum. They believed that current curriculum was contradicting with the nomadic culture. Further, nomads revealed that it was critical decision to send their children for schooling because schooling needs expenditures and due to increased labour force, earnings are going lower. This finding strengthens the above-discussed relation between education and economic conditions, also observed in the case of Rajhistan and Cholistan desert. Kenyan nomads have specific criteria of sending their children to school. For example, the first born baby was considered to be physically strong and was preferred to take care of the herds, therefore, never sent to school. Sometimes, if a child was obstinate and not suitable for animal rearing, he was also sent for acquiring education as a punishment for him¹⁵⁴.

¹⁵²Ibid. p 17.

¹⁵³Suleman, S.A and Khier, M.M, Nomadic Education in Sudan, in UNESCO (BRED), The Education of Nomadic Population in Africa, Volume 1, (1997) edited by C. Ezeomah, UNESCO (BRED). (C.f)Krätli, S. (2001). Education provision to nomadic pastoralists. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.p.18

¹⁵⁴Izzy Birch, *Towards Education for Nomads: Community Perspectives in Kenya*(IIED, 2010).20-21.

A study on education for nomadic children in African countries found that mobility is the most important factors that influence the education of nomadic children. This mobility, either, can be on the daily basis like in Eritrean shepherders or long distances like in Touareg herders. The study also noted the gender inequality in education of children among nomads. Less number of girls was being sent to schools as it is believed that during economic recessions, educated males can contribute in earnings but females, therefore, males are sent for education as a coping strategy obtainable in odd times¹⁵⁵. Same thinking exists among nomads living in the lesser Cholistan areas. Here also, male children are preferably sent for education as they can be earning hand in future.

In addition, factors such as education system, curriculum and financial resources are the major hurdles in getting education by nomads in Somalia. There were least possibilities that educational attainment could be beneficial for nomads because if nomadic parents made arrangements for the formal education of their children, it would not be rewarding socially and economically in the nomadic environment. Furthermore, a nomadic child would be always uneasy with the formal education set up such as class schedule, class room, teaching tools, chairs and dress code due to their permanent mobility from one place to other after few weeks¹⁵⁶. The same mind set can be observed in Cholistan and the current study will fill the literature gap by exploring the reason of illiteracy in Cholistan.

A number of national governments around the globe want the proper settlements of nomads for the provision of social services such as health and education. At the moment,

¹⁵⁵Oxfam GB, "Beyond the Mainstream, Education and Gender Equality Series, Programme Insights,"(Oxfam. Available from [www. google scholar. com](http://www.google scholar. com) [Accessed on 22 nd February 2013], 2005).

¹⁵⁶Jama, Muhammad. A. (1993). Strategies on Nomadic Education Delivery. State of the Art Review.Mogadishu, Somalia: UNICEF Somalia, Education Unit, Document,1103.4.

these basic services could be provided through the efficient use of certain communication channels and other technological inventions¹⁵⁷.

3.6 Family in Nomadic Societies

Gypsies nomadic tribes strictly follow their centuries old tradition and moral codes. These people have maintained extended family system and aged are given high social status. Most of the Gypsies are illiterate as they did not attend school for formal education reason being their nomadic life styles that make it impossible to access any school. Adoption of nomadic life by Gypsies has created many conflicts with the settlers on the ownership of land¹⁵⁸.

Among Iranian nomads, marriage provides base to the basic family structure. Although, family members live at different places yet they are under the kinship control and family as an institution protects its members throughout life. Likely, the family also arranges the marriage of widow with any of the close relative who protects the widow's honour¹⁵⁹. While, economy in Tibetan pastoralists revolves around the family system; division of labour is based on gender, both men and women perform their assigned tasks; women stay at home and perform certain tasks related to home or its surrounding whereas, men perform outdoor activities¹⁶⁰.

In the modern time, nomadic families in African countries also need to engage in different earning activities other than traditional herding, therefore, they split human resource into parts for carrying out different economic activities at faraway places; in such situation, survival of family is possible through utilization of modern technology for maintaining

¹⁵⁷Douglas L Johnson, "Nomadism and Desertification in Africa and the Middle East," *GeoJournal* 31, no. 1 (1993).62.

¹⁵⁸Pauline Lane, Siobhan Spencer, and Muzelley McCready, *Perspectives on Ageing in Gypsy Families*(Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2012).

¹⁵⁹Vida Nassehi-Behnam, "Change and the Iranian Family," *Current anthropology* (1985).

¹⁶⁰Angela Manderscheid, "Decline and Re-Emergence of Nomadism: Tibetan Pastoralists Revive a Nomadic Way of Life and Production," *GeoJournal* 53, no. 2 (2001).175.

contact¹⁶¹. The lesser Cholistan also follows these trends. Members of the nomad families in Chad arrange health services for both human and animals simultaneously¹⁶². While, family members, especially, father in Chad arranges some self-prescribe basic medicines for the members that are useful at times¹⁶³. Moreover, majority of the Raen nomads families live together in the cluster form that support them in herding, milking the animals and health problems¹⁶⁴.

3.7 Socio-Economic Conditions of Nomads

Over the last three decades, nomads in the East Africa encountered many problems in spending life with their traditional ways and socio-economic conditions. As in Kenya and Tanzania, governments are using land for alternate commercial purposes and nomads are facing scarcity of lands for pastures to support their increasing populace. The study also explored that in Uganda and Ethiopia, pastoralists are facing droughts and famines along with ethnic and political insecurities¹⁶⁵. Now, how these new socio-economic changes affect the nomads of Cholistan is still unknown.

A study of food security and vulnerability in Rajasthan, India shows that the Rajasthan desert is the most vulnerable and insecure in terms of availability of food. In addition, natural catastrophes like droughts and famine coupled with exclusion of a notable proportion of population on the basis of social class difference and unavailability of basic infrastructure make it more susceptible. These key factors adversely affect the socio-

¹⁶¹Gilles Stockton, "Sugar for the Tea: Assistance and the State of Pastoralism in the Horn of Africa," *Pastoralism* 2, no. 1 (2012).6.

¹⁶²Esther Schelling et al., "Towards Integrated and Adapted Health Services for Nomadic Pastoralists and Their Animals: A North–South Partnership," in *Handbook of Transdisciplinary Research*(Springer, 2008).288.

¹⁶³Lori Leonard, "Where There Is No State: Household Strategies for the Management of Illness in Chad," *Social science & medicine* 61, no. 1 (2005).

¹⁶⁴Ansari-Renani et al., "Nomadic Pastoralism in Southern Iran."7.

¹⁶⁵Elliot Fratkin, "East African Pastoralism in Transition: Maasai, Boran, and Rendille Cases," *African Studies Review* 44, no. 03 (2001).2.

economic indicators such as infant mortality and female literacy. Women illiteracy in this state is highest among all the Indian states¹⁶⁶. These conditions are quite relevant to the greater Cholistan.

3.8 Religion in Nomadic Societies

Sanctity of religion and religious personalities is found in nomads of Saharan countries. The Rgaybat nomads visit the shrine of religious saint Sidi Ahmad-Rgaybi annually. Nomads of this region have deep religious affiliation for saints, so they never take oath of the tomb as they have firm belief that “only ignorant people swear at shrines”. Religion plays a significant role in dealing with the criminal acts, in case of a crime committed, the accused are asked to take oath on Holy Quran (not tomb of Sidi Ahmad-Rgaybi) to prove innocence¹⁶⁷.

Similarly, in the nomadic population of Ethiopia, local nomads are influenced by the religious leaders. For instance, the availability of health services for women is subject to the permission of religious leader. Religious leader have the authority to forbid women to visit health centre and can recommend praying at home for health. After getting pregnant, it is the obligation for woman to visit the religious leader to inform him about her pregnancy and requesting him to pray for an easy delivery¹⁶⁸. Same is the case with the nomads of Cholistan where the religious leaders, called as *peer* is highly regarded and given due respect. Similarly, like Rgaybat nomads, the people of Cholistan visit the shrine of religious saint *Chanan peer* annually.

¹⁶⁶World Food Programme, VAM Unit: "Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Profile of Rajasthan." (2001)

¹⁶⁷David M Hart, "The Rgaybat: Camel Nomads of the Western Sahara," *The Journal of North African Studies* 3, no. 4 (1998).

¹⁶⁸Anke van der Kwaak et al., "Understanding Nomadic Realities: Case Studies on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Eastern Africa," (2012).46.

3.9 Marriage in Nomads

Bukhtiari nomads in Iran marry women for the continuity of their family traditions and care of herds which is not possible without women. The author noted five types of marriages in the Bukhtiari nomads, known as Nafbuoon (When parents decide about the marriage of baby girl before the time of cutting placenta), Gabega (exchange marriage), Family marriage (When boys marry in the close relatives with belief that this marriage will strengthen the family bonds), Hambari Marriage (when a boy is working with another family since childhood and host family agrees to marry their daughter) and Xinbas(when the sister or daughter of killer is married to the son or brother of the person get killed) ¹⁶⁹.

Similarly, Bedouins in Saudi Arabia practiced endogamy because of their perception that it helps to keep the race pure. Paternal cousin is given top priority as she would be having genuine concern about her husband (cousin) as kids as property of the family. In case, if there is no paternal cousin, then, maternal cousin is preferred for marriage. Cousin marriage is so important that its advantages are idioms like “*Banat ammak tunkul hammak*(your cousin will help you in time of trouble)¹⁷⁰.

A comparison of marriage pattern in the Saharan nomads and Bedouins in Saudi Arabia showed that in former tribes, maternal cousin is preferred for marriage while later ones prefer patri-parallel marriage. All the matters related to marriage and divorces are dealt according to Quranic laws. Women are given high social status and never veil their face¹⁷¹.

Marriage increases social linkages among the nomadic people. This relationship helps to avail and utilize pasture out of one’s clan when local resources are inadequate to

¹⁶⁹ Mohammad Reza Shahbazi, "The Role of Marriage in Social Relations in Bakhtiari Tribe," (2012).

¹⁷⁰ Elbadour Ibrahim, "Particularities of Bedouins“ Social Life," *Human & Social Studies Research and Practice* 1(2012).86.

¹⁷¹ Hart, David M. "The Rgaybat: camel nomads of the Western Sahara." *The Journal of North African Studies* 3, no. 4 (1998): 28-54.

meet the needs of herd¹⁷². Among the Ahmada nomads of Sudan, there was tendency of preferential marriage in the patri-lineage. Marriage age for female is 12-14 years, bride has no say in the selection of spouse, decision making on marriage lies with hands of father. The role of mother is to negotiate successfully for the maximum price of the bride and receive it as the *mahar* (dower) for her. After marriage, husband lives with wife's family till the birth of first child. Bride is gifted with animals at the time marriage which remains her property at her in-laws home¹⁷³. Similarly, Cholistan also has an established tradition for marriage that are yet to be explored. The current study keeping the available literature as a base, will explore these traditions of marriage.

3. 10 Animal Husbandry in Nomads

Livestock holds a significant position in the social life of nomads of all over the globe and Cholistan is no exception. In Cholistan, the increased number of animals represents increased social status of a particular nomadic family and otherwise. Animals are also used as gifts on social events like marriage and child birth. Likewise, guests are served with the meat of animals on social gatherings like marriage, child birth or death¹⁷⁴.

While in other nomadic societies such as in Rgaybat nomadic tribe of the Western Sahara, there exists terms and conditions of contract (*mniha*) between owner of the large camels herds and herders. Under this agreement, camels and their off springs belong to the owner while herders enjoy riding, milk and hair of the camels for indefinite duration¹⁷⁵.

Contrary to this, in the Cholistan desert, the people hand over one or two animals to herders for few months when they are unable to graze. Livestock is the major source of social and

¹⁷² Johnson, "Nomadism and Desertification in Africa and the Middle East."59.

¹⁷³ Casciarri, "The Role of Women in the Changing Family and Social Organization of Ahâmda Pastoralists (Central Sudan)."

¹⁷⁴ Akhter and Arshad, "Arid Rangelands in the Cholistan Desert (Pakistan)."210-217.

¹⁷⁵ Hart, David M. "The Rgaybat: camel nomads of the Western Sahara." *The Journal of North African Studies* 3, no. 4 (1998): 28-54.

economic asset for the pastoralists; therefore, herds are the most important factor to measure the level of poverty as compared to the household income¹⁷⁶.

Same like Cholistan, livestock plays a major role for the survival and subsistence of the Tibetan nomads. Tibetan animals that includes yak, yak-cattle, sheep, goats and horses are reared, having long hair and therefore can resist severe weather conditions. Yak is the most important animal of this region as it provides milk, meat and hair to the nomads. Horses are kept as pack animals and are helpful in mobility from one place to another in search of fresh pasture. A fair part of nomad's income comes from wool and hair of sheep and goats. Usually, a family consumes 25-30 sheep and goats per year as the supplementary part of food¹⁷⁷.

3.11 Migration in Nomads

During dry season, nomads migrate, adopting it as strategy to avoid human and livestock loss, but studies has also found that migration holds some disadvantages as nomads cannot benefit from the social services such as education and health due to transhumance¹⁷⁸.

Generally, it is known that nomads migrate due to the scarcity of water and fodder but they also migrate for the protection of certain diseases both for human beings and their livestock¹⁷⁹. Potential health problems determine the direction of migration where both nomads and their animals can remain secure from health risks. Although when there is drought or dry year, then any place can be chosen as next migration cite irrespective of any

¹⁷⁶ Aklilu and Catley, "Livestock Exports from the Horn of Africa: An Analysis of Benefits by Pastoralist Wealth Group and Policy Implications."8.

¹⁷⁷ Miller, "Normads of the Tibetan Plateau Rangelands in Western China. Part Three. Pastoral Development and Future Challenges."17-20.

¹⁷⁸ World Food Proqramme, VAM Unit "Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Profile of Rajhistan." (2001)

¹⁷⁹ Sheik-Mohamed and Velema, "Where Health Care Has No Access: The Nomadic Populations of Sub-Saharan Africa."700.

existing health risk¹⁸⁰. For example, nomads in Rajasthan, India migrate to the settled area with advance arrangements for their livestock. Wheat stubbles are booked in advance by the herders. This migration results into certain benefits for nomads such as better feeding of their animal that result in better health and more reproduction¹⁸¹.

There are different migration practices among nomads such Sahrawa nomads plan their migration at night to avoid severe heat of the day time. These nomads have extraordinary knowledge of ethno astronomy and use North Star as a bench mark as a guideline to keep right direction during travelling. Their expertise to find direction can be judged from this narrative that one nomad forgot his knife at a place while displacement, but when he remembered after 8-9 years, he was so accurate in finding the direction that he reached the exact place and found his lost knife¹⁸².

Similar to the migrating reasons of the people of Cholistan, the pastoralists in African countries migrate, reason being the scarcity of fodder for animals. Grazing animals eat up all the available natural pasture over certain period of time, so for feeding the livestock, nomads need to shift to another location having forage along with their herds and family members¹⁸³.

There are known migration months and along with pros and cons for the nomads. Every year in the months of March till April, there is shortage of water and fodder for animals in the desert areas that results into migration to the nearby settled areas. The pastoralists' migration to the settled areas is a give and take phenomenon between nomads

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.700.

¹⁸¹ P Robbins, "Nomadization in Rajasthan," *India: Migration, institutions, and* (1998).105.

¹⁸² Hart, David M. "The Rgaybat: camel nomads of the Western Sahara." *The Journal of North African Studies* 3, no. 4 (1998): 28-54.

¹⁸³ Andrew B Smith, "Animal husbandry, nomadic breeding, and domestication of animals. the role of food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries " 3.

and farmers. Nomads have access to water and earn from some labour work at the farms, while farmers have cheaper labour and animal manure to increase the soil fertility¹⁸⁴.

Nomadic life style is conditioned with movement from one place to another one in search of dispersed and scarce sources of water and fodder. This movement results as determinant for health of the nomads but nature of common diseases found in nomadic population is unexplored due to unavailability of data¹⁸⁵. Therefore, the current study will explore the common diseases in Cholistan with special reference to women.

3.12 Social Organization in Nomads

Individuals serving as mediators and leaders are elderly and are highly respected. Furthermore, leadership is usually not formal in the pastoralists' societies and conflicts are resolved with consensus. Anyhow, some nomadic societies have defined mechanism in place for selection and control of individual leadership¹⁸⁶.

For example, there are specific and designed patterns of social organization of nomads living in rural Mongolia. There exists a "social relation of obligation" under which goods and services are exchanged among the members. Although strongest base for this network is blood relationship but sometimes neighbours are also included in it. Under this system of social organization, elders are expected to provide guidance and help in kind and cash to their respective gender whereas younger are bound to show respect, obedience and

¹⁸⁴ Akhter and Arshad, "Arid Rangelands in the Cholistan Desert (Pakistan)."3.

¹⁸⁵ Sheik-Mohamed and Velema, "Where Health Care Has No Access: The Nomadic Populations of Sub-Saharan Africa."695.

¹⁸⁶ Smith, "Animal Husbandry, Nomadic Breeding, and Domestication of Animals. The Role of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries".

labour¹⁸⁷. Similarly, nomads in the Cholistan have informal ethical code which regulate the use of land territories and water points such as *tobas* and *kunds*¹⁸⁸.

Likewise, in Bedouin nomads of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh is the leader of the tribe in peace and war. He is responsible to represent his tribe in other tribes and government functionaries. Within the tribe, in the peace time, his responsibility are to lead the tribe in search of grazing and serving as a judge strictly in accordance with the traditions while during the war times, he along with his sons have to show bravery and set an exemplary character for his followers¹⁸⁹.

Alike, The Rgaybat nomads are divided into two territories called Qaf (eastern) and Kaf (western) for pastoral economic activities and territorial functioning. Both the parts are politically dealt by two shaykhs of equal authority rather than a single authoritative person (shaykh al-shuyukh). Skyakh of the each Qaf and Kaf have twenty members constituting executive council called locally as ait arba'in. This body has legislative and executive responsibilities both in wartime and peace. During wartime it plans out the attack and defence strategy while during peace time, it is responsible for maintaining internal social order through enforcement of Shri'a laws¹⁹⁰. Align with the traditions of Cholistan, Tuareg nomads have social organization based on an absolute patriarchal system. They have different groups with responsibilities to perform different functions and have definite social status and work errands¹⁹¹.

¹⁸⁷David Sneath, "Social Relations, Networks, and Social Organization in Post-Socialist Rural Mongolia," *Nomadic Peoples* 33(1993).197.

¹⁸⁸Akhter and Arshad, "Arid Rangelands in the Cholistan Desert (Pakistan)."

¹⁸⁹Ibrahim, "Particularities of Bedouins" Social Life." 76.

¹⁹⁰Michel Lesourd, "Note Sur Le Droit Coutumier Des Reguibat," *Trav. de l'Inst. de Rech. sahar.(Alger)* 18(1959).44.

¹⁹¹Pedersen and Benjaminsen, "Food Security and Pastoralism in the Northern Sahel."177.

In the Kenyan nomads, the eldest son is head of the family after the death of his father. He has the responsibility of all of his siblings as inherits all the rights of family herds. In case, if the family is poor and do not own herd, then as per the traditions, the eldest son do not go as the herder of other people livestock due to his social position¹⁹².

3.13 Roles and Status of Women in Nomadic Societies

Women in the Cholistan are performing hard tasks such as fetching water, collecting woods for fuel and caring of livestock but same like Iranian, African and Rajhistani nomads, they are not independent in decision-making about the number of children, utilization of social and economic resources such as health and educational facilities. Women in Cholistan are not allowed to sell their lands and animals for their needs¹⁹³.

The studies established the same findings from nomads in Rajhistan (India). They narrated that women have least say in the decision-making both inside and outside of the family. So in nomadic societies of Cholistan, Iran, Rajhistan and Africa, all the decision-making lies with the males such as education of children, borrowing or lending money, migrating, taking measures for health, selling land, livestock and crops¹⁹⁴. These male dominated societies of nomads have made the life of women more miserable despite the fact that they are more productive than men in many cases. Moreover, domestic chores of women are same in Cholistan and Rajhistan like fetching water for human and animal use, collecting fodder and caring for livestock at home. At some places, in Rajhistan, women are also performing duties as herders of sheep and goats¹⁹⁵.

¹⁹² Wario R Adano and Karen Witsenburg, "Once Nomads Settle," in *As Pastoralists Settle*(Springer, 2005).114.

¹⁹³ J.A. Nasir, M. Akhtar, and R. Salim, "Measuring and Modeling the Domestic Empowerment of Rural Women in Pakistan," *Journal of Statistics* 14(2007).22.

¹⁹⁴ FAO, "Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Profile of Rajhistan." (2001).

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

In all the nomadic societies, the opinion of women holds no value in decision making. Women are only informed after the decision is made regarding money matters, children education, migrating from place to another, selling animals and grains. In the Khema bai, a village of Rajhistan in district Churu, the women expressed themselves that their job is to make *roti* (bread) and look after home; but they are not allowed to open their mouth in front of man¹⁹⁶. This kind of gender discrimination is very common in Cholistan but yet, it is unexplored. The current study will be the first of its kind to explore this phenomenon of discrimination and find if any social change occurred during the last past forty years.

Nomadic women in Gujjar and Bakerwal tribes in Azad Jamu and Kashmir of India are leading, socially and economically, a deprived life. They perform all the domestic chores such as cooking, washing, packing for migration and rearing of kids. Similarly, they equally participate in economic activities like selling milk, helping their men in farming and herding the cattles for grazing. Although, women in both tribes remain busy in all these activities since early morning till late hours, yet their contribution is not accepted by males and they are discriminated and are victim of exploitation in all fields of life¹⁹⁷. These all exploitations are also observed in Cholistan, the study areas of this research but yet to be explored.

African nomadic societies are also not secure against gender discrimination; there exists substantial disparity against women in the South African nomadic societies. The study established that in nomadic societies, the survival rate for boy is 22 % higher than that

¹⁹⁶ FAO, "Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Profile of Rajhistan" (2001)

¹⁹⁷ Gul, "Assessment and Understanding of Gujjar and Bakerwal Women's Health in Jammu and Kashmir."39.

of girls till the age of 5 while the life expectancy of males is 41 years while women's average age is 31 years¹⁹⁸.

Like the nomadic women of Cholistan, Iran, Rajhistan, and Africa, Tibetan women also play a significant role in the social life. But their contributions are regarded as they have pivotal role in futuristic human resource and have the key responsibility to bear and rear the children. In addition, these women have active contribution in economic activities as they make decisions regarding usage of rangelands. Apart from all these major activities, they are also herding the animals and are involved in the harvesting activities other than preparing the products from livestock milk, wool and hair¹⁹⁹. Besides all, in the Ahmada pastoralist in Sudan, social organization, economic activities and political life are dependent on male dominancy where females perceived themselves as weaker and less empowered²⁰⁰.

Generally, a change in the roles and statuses of women is observed before and after sedentarization. Settlement increases the responsibility of pastoral women. At one end, the facilities like grinding mills and water pumps have made women life easier but on the other, they are more involved in agricultural labour work along with the increased domestic responsibilities²⁰¹.

Semi-nomads of Dhangar in Maharashtra, India are living in joint family system and depend on sheep rearing for subsistence. Women are not involved in outdoor economic activities; their duties are limited in the boundaries of home and are involved in the tasks

¹⁹⁸ Aklilu and Catley, "Livestock Exports from the Horn of Africa: An Analysis of Benefits by Pastoralist Wealth Group and Policy Implications."10.

¹⁹⁹ Miller, "Normads of the Tibetan Plateau Rangelands in Western China. Part Three. Pastoral Development and Future Challenges."17-20.

²⁰⁰ Casciarri, "The Role of Women in the Changing Family and Social Organization of Ahâmda Pastoralists (Central Sudan)."105-118.

²⁰¹ Ibid.105-118.

like processing the milk products²⁰². But contrary to that, there is significant contribution of women of Gujjars nomads in India where they share 55% of the labour work higher than men and women also work outside as the labourers²⁰³.

Similarly, women in the Iranian nomadic tribe Raen perform many important functions in animal husbandry. They not only milk animals but also serve as birth attendant during animal births since they have smaller hands, therefore, can do this job better than men. Moreover, little and ill animals are kept at home under the special care of women until they are able to join herds²⁰⁴. While in the Sudanese nomads, wife is also responsible for provision of bread and butter to her family including her husband²⁰⁵.

Summing up it all, the reviewed literature finds that women have active role in the nomadic life and perform many important functions such as child care, preparation of food, milking the livestock, take caring for small and packed animals such as goats and lambs, extending help in grazing their herds over nearby pastures and fetching water from distance water sources²⁰⁶.

The literature further finds that roles of women are significant in all cases and sedentarization resulted in more work and responsibilities on the part of women. When there is more dependence on cultivation and overall financial conditions of the family is reduced or the men get jobless, then, it is the duty of women to meet the household expenditures. In the nomadic life, women do multiple tasks for their contribution in the economy of the family. Women milk the animals; churn it for preparing butter, and then selling all the milk products

²⁰²DS Patil et al., "Socio Economic Profile of Sheep Reared Dhangar Pastoralists of Maharashtra, India." p.88-89

²⁰³Koundal, "Poverty among Nomadic Gujjars—a Case Study of J & K and Hp."208.

²⁰⁴Ansari-Renani et al., "Nomadic Pastoralism in Southern Iran."13.

²⁰⁵Fouad N Ibrahim, "The Role of Women Peasants in the Process of Desertification in Western Sudan," *GeoJournal* 6, no. 1 (1982).28.

²⁰⁶Elliot Fratkin and Kevin Smith, "Women's Changing Economic Roles with Pastoral Sedentarization: Varying Strategies in Alternate Rendille Communities," *Human Ecology* 23, no. 4 (1995).162.

in the markets, work in the fields when required and meanwhile also perform all the household chores²⁰⁷.

Further, the literature finds that status of woman keeps changing with the different phases of her life. For example, a nomadic girl is told about the importance of milk since her initial years of life, and is taught to behave like a mature woman. She is fully engaged in all the household tasks since the age of seven years. At the age of 13-14, she is married with the consent of her parents, and in her in-laws home, she is entirely dependent on the mother in law and lives in the same camp. But after the birth of 3 to 4 children, she is allowed to build her own hut and be the owner of her part of milk. A bride who brings a large number of cows as dowry is given more respect as compare to others²⁰⁸.

The literature makes it evident that the nomadic societies of all over the world share many important features and their process of social change and organization of social institutions have many aspects that are same and link together. Now, the available literature on the nomadic societies of all over the world discusses social changes, the current traditional practices and organization of their social institutions but in case of Cholistan, the dearth of literature is visible and these phenomenon are yet to be explored. Therefore, the current study is a much needed study on the Cholistan desert that will explore the Cholistani society and geography still unknown to outside world. In addition, the study will fill this literature gap by highlighting the social institutions like family, marriage, health, economy, religion, education and discuss in details the customs and tradition of this area with respect to these institutions. This all exploration will unfold the role of women, the main focus of the study; they performed in past forty years and what status they enjoyed as its result.

²⁰⁷Fouad N Ibrahim, *Op.Cit* .28.

²⁰⁸M De Bruijn, "A Pastoral Women's Economy Crisis: The Fulbe in Central Mali. Commission on Nomadic Peoples.," *Nomadic Peoples Number* 36/37(1997). 91.

4. Chapter- IV: Research Methodology

This chapter introduces methodology adopted for the study. It describes and justifies use of specific research design and approaches employed for the study. It includes research objectives, research question, research method, data collection and analysis.

Research design shows specific directions for the whole research process²⁰⁹.

Similarly, objectives, hypotheses and research questions are the lighthouse of the research process, and finding an answer to them, results into the accomplishment of the research goals. For the current study, the researcher has set objectives and formulated research question to meet the research goals. The current study is an exploratory research and hence hypotheses cannot be set for this research as hypothesis is an expected but un-confirmed relationship between two or more variables²¹⁰. Moreover, hypotheses are based on the some prior available empirical literature and also used when expected results are known. Since in our case, there is dearth of literature and change in socio-economic roles of women of Cholistan, Pakistan is still lacks and apart from some similar qualitative studies based on the nomadic societies of Rajhistan, Iran and Africa, there is no in-depth study available. Therefore, a qualitative exploratory research approach is best fit to find the impacts of the induced changes on the role of women in Cholistan. In wake of this, the researcher has formulated the objectives and research question to effectively and clearly achieve the research goals.

1. To produce an ethnographic description of the universe

Cholistani society and geography is still unknown to the most of outsiders. The study has highlighted the social institutions like family, marriage, health, economic,

²⁰⁹Creswell, John W. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications, 2014.

²¹⁰Royce A. Singleton, and C. Bruce, *Approaches to Social Research*, 4th ed.(New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). 65.

political, religion, education and discussed in detail, the customs and tradition of the area with respect to these institutions.

2. To unfold the contemporary role and status of women in Cholistan society.

Sociologically speaking, roles and statuses are changing during the life of humans at different stages. This study has unfolded the roles women performed and what statuses they enjoyed as a result of their executed roles in the past forty years and resultantly, what changes have occurred in their role and status in the contemporary Cholistan.

3. Making comparison of the role and status of women in the old social and economic institutions like marriage, family, religion, health, education and economy

Social change is occurring everywhere irrespective of the developmental stage of the given society. In order to comprehend the changes occurred during the last forty years or so, the current study has made comparison of the role and status of women in the old social and economic institutions like marriage, family, religion, economy, health and education.

The main research question is, “what impacts the induced changes have on the role of women in Cholistan” but at the same time, we have examined the status of women in Cholistan as roles and statuses cannot be understood separately.

When researcher gets interest in any topic, question arises of the selection of best method which can help in the achievement of research goals with perfection and enables researcher to cover all the dimensions of research questions holistically. In addition, it can help in meeting with hurdles and difficulties of research process technically. Therefore, to study the roles and status of women of Cholistan, it was necessary to choose a methodology that can deal women with consideration of accepting them being a part of land with the distinguished characteristics, influence of which is also need to be considered. For research on the selected topic, it is necessary to discuss issues related with women of that particular society which was not overt in nature and relatively prefer to conceal its women.

Prerequisite of this study is not numerical interpretation of the facts rather it demands for insight study having aptitude of probing in phenomenon, so basically the present study has employed qualitative research method.

In qualitative research, a method which can study subject with consideration of environment is considered best for study. Such method is called ethnographical way of research. Therefore, from the methods of qualitative research, ethno-methodology was used to collect relevant information from the study area.

Ethno-methodology refers to that method of social research in which the researcher participates himself/herself physically and establishes social contacts within the group, institution or community to collect, interpret and analyze a situation or condition. It is necessary for the researcher to be a part and parcel of the study population to collect primary and firsthand information through interaction, participation, observation, communication, interviews (discussions) of both structured and unstructured type and going through the history of the subject(s) and related documents etc. Therefore, this method of research relies on a blend of observational, interview and archival sources²¹¹. Traditionally, this has been the only method of social research which uses an assortment of methods like participation, observation, interviewing, documentary analysis and content analysis at a time or a „pick-n-mix“ approach according to the nature of the study and field requirements with the condition that the researcher must be present in the field for a long time himself/herself.

All these methods enhance the proficiency of research as observation allows a researcher to go beyond the descriptive things. While interview in the ethnographic research are most important as it helps in collecting primary data and interviews nevertheless involve

²¹¹ Michael Angrosino, *Doing Ethnographic and Observational Research*(London: Sage, 2007).51.

a somewhat verified, in-depth, exchange between researchers and researched”²¹². At the same time, documentary analysis facilitates the true appraisal of the valuable work available about topic and content analysis broadens the limits; which is defined “content analysis is a conscious description of any material explicating subject carefully and systematically of all accounts of information. As it can be performed on various forms of human communication; this may include various permutations of written documents, photographs, motion pictures or video tape, and audiotapes”²¹³.

Ethno-methodology is a paradigm with “focuses on the ways people make sense out of life in the process of living it”²¹⁴. In this research, the researcher is interested in how the subjects of research theorize about their own behavior rather than imposing a theory from outside. The test of success is that the subject itself recognizes the description of familiar features of their culture²¹⁵. This method has three characteristics vis-à-vis; it aims to represent a view of the world as it is structured by the participant under observation by eliciting phenomenological data; it takes place in the undisturbed natural setting of the subject; and it attempts to represent the totality of the social, cultural and economic situation regarding the context to be equally important as the action²¹⁶.

This is a hard type of research for many reasons. As so much of the culture is hidden and rarely made explicit, the data obtained by the researcher needs to be pursued by diving

²¹²Rosaline Barbour, *Introducing Qualitative Research*(Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2008).113.

²¹³Bruce Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* 6th ed.(Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2007). 304.

²¹⁴Earl Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research*, 4th ed.(New York: Thomson Wadsworth, 2008). 61.

²¹⁵ Goetz, J.P. &LeCompte ,M.D.,1984. *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research*.London : Academic Press. p.17.

²¹⁶Uzzell, D. Ethnographic and action research in research methods in psychology. In G.M. Breakwell, S. Hammond, & C. Fife-Shaw (Eds.), *Research methods in psychology* (1997). (pp. 302-313). London: Sage.

deep into the mode of communication and behavior of the respondents and of study environment in which they live²¹⁷.

*The researcher establishes some genuinely social interaction in the field with the subjects of the study, some direct observations of relevant events, some formal and great deal of informed interviewing, some systematic counting, some collection of documents and artifacts, and open-endedness in the direction the study takes*²¹⁸.

This qualitative study was conducted within the geographical territory of Cholistan. Our target population was specifically females of Cholistan for interviews. As target population is “the population to which researcher would like to generalize his or her results”^{so} the study was primarily focused on women of Cholistan. For collection of primary data which is “*description of study written by a person who conducted it*”²¹⁹.

The researcher also took account of written work of academicians, politicians, historians, geologists, geographers, anthropologists and sociologists to have some idea of the nature of the Cholistani society, its topography, history, culture and extent of the change. “A secondary source in literature is generally a much brief description of a study written by someone other than the original researcher”²²⁰.

Secondary data about the population, per capita income, social services etc. were obtained from different official and non-official reports about the universe. Local religious leaders like priests or *Mulalhs*, the *Syyeds*, etc. were also interviewed to have an idea about the change in the religious practices of the local population. The menials (*kammies*) were also interviewed to know about the social organization of the area and the role their women play in the society.

²¹⁷Becker, Howard, 1958. “Problems of Inferences and Proof in Participant Observation”, in *American Sociological Review* Vol. 23.No.6.

²¹⁸George J McCall and Jerry Laird Simmons, *Issues in Participant Observation: A Text and Reader*, vol. 7027(Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1969).1.

²¹⁹Lorraine R Gay, Geoffrey E Mills, and Peter W Airasian, *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application*(Merrill Columbus, OH, 2000).42.

²²⁰Ibid. 45.

4.1 Sampling Strategy and Size

Purposive sampling strategy is of much importance in qualitative researches, it has been described as:

This means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study²²¹.

Cholistan as an independent administrative unit does not exist. The Universe/Cholistan desert is divided into three clusters each falling within the administrative jurisdiction of three districts of the Punjab province namely Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar and Rahim Yar Khan. As mentioned earlier, Cholistan is divided into two geographic locations namely „Greater Cholistan „, and „, Lesser Cholistan and depending on the water availability, the population moves in search of water and fodder like other desert dweller elsewhere in world.

Desert population is mostly found around the unit of water storage called *toba*, so *toba* is set as the unit of sample to access respondents. In greater Cholistan, our unit of study was *Toba*. In lesser Cholistan, contrary to greater Cholistan, problems of data collection were less, as all the area is now in the government revenue record and is divided into recognized/ official *Chaks*/villages. Sampling in this area was made out of the villages through a strategy called experience survey.

Total 50 elderly women, well versed in the local folk history were identified (experience survey) and interviewed in the three clusters to find out the difference in their life style forty years back and now. Being an ethnographic study, sampling is of secondary importance than experience survey i.e. to interview only those who matter and not every elderly woman.

²²¹John W Creswell, *Qualitative Theory and Research Design*, 2nd ed.(California, USA: SAGE Publications, 2014). p125.

Paradoxically, the number of respondents seemed smaller but ethnographic researches do not depend on the sample size, rather depends upon the quality of the information gathered.

The major problem with data collection in the area was that in the greater Cholistan desert, population is mostly found around the unit of water storage called *toba* (s). *Tobas* or water reservoirs are not permanent in nature and can be anywhere in the desert attracting people for a temporary settlement. Thus, making availability of interviewees a bit difficult and they have to be traced out in the wilderness of the desert.

For this study, the researcher chose elderly women of age 50 years and above so that the researcher could peep in the past life of Cholistani women along with studying in-depth their current life phenomena. There are number of factors which inspired to focus elderly women. Firstly, In Cholistani community, old age women is found to be in the most influential timeframe of their life as they are being highly respected and listened more than ever before. This position augments their strength to speak out about different realities. Secondly, the nature of the study demands comprehension of past events and these women have plenty of experiences about past life and sometime they can fill gap of information as spectator of foregoing generation, as witness or listener. Thirdly, they could also elaborate current life patterns of women prevailing in the Cholistan as it is one of the important objectives of the study being investigated and explored. Finally, elderly women, having spent the most part of the life and being well-versed with the past and present, are capable to elucidate change.

To get information of past forty years, women of fifty years were considered because women life expectancy in Pakistan is 66 years²²² (WHO, 2012) and these women construct genuine group of elderly in Pakistani society.

4.2 Field Work

Fortunately, the researcher knew the area well and is well-versed with the local languages and dialect and has internalized many traits and customs of the study area that made it easy for her to access to the people as an insider. This made observing and living with these people easy for the research to collect data. This was an overt study and the researcher needed not to conceal her identity as in many ethnographic studies the researchers do. With covert study we have advantage that we have easy access to respondents because for covert study respondent's permission is not compulsory and there is less chance of respondent's reactivity means they will not try to bring change in their behavior due to presence of researcher. But for this study, their permission and access was possible because researcher was a female having no major extra-terrestrial for the respondents, so there was also less chances for respondent's reactivity. The researcher did not had any anxiety about concealing her identity and was free to utilize all methods like observation interviewing to maximize the precision of her data collection. Due to overt nature of the study, it was easy to take notes because respondents were aware about the role of the researcher. It was very important as; "Notes are very important to an ethnographer, and it is too risky to rely exclusively on your memory"²²³.

Working as an overt researcher, it was also important to deal with the ethical issue of informed consent because in this way, there was a right on the part of the respondents that they could deny to participate if they could not find them self- satisfied.

²²²United Nations Organization, "Pakistan Health Profile, Selected Indicators,"(New York: WHO, 2012).1.

²²³ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 3rd ed.(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).296.

The main tool of data collection was protracted qualitative interviews and participant observation. “Participant observation combines participation in the lives of the people under study with maintenance of professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data”²²⁴.

Many cultural aspects were observed and internalized through participation like ceremonies of marriage, births, *rites de passage etc.* With the help of observation, the researcher intended to collect information on the issues of treatment with women; young women, aged women, adult women, married and unmarried women etc.

The researcher, from the very beginning, made it clear to the local community leaders also called as gate keepers” or resource persons that a study of overt nature is being conducted and their confidence would be obtained. Gatekeeper is a leader or person who is willing to accept the purpose of the study and vouch for researcher’s purpose²²⁵.

Gatekeepers may be formal or informal watchdogs who protect the settings, people, or institutions sought as the target of research²²⁶. It is not compulsory that these people have a vital place in social hierarchy but they can make access to target either easy or difficult. Moreover, they arranged guide and informants who after getting convinced about the purpose and utility of the study for women of Cholistan provided necessary assistance as “one way to handle initial relationships is to locate guides and informants”²²⁷. Moreover, participation in the marriages, funerals, *rites de passage*, religious ceremonies, family life, were insured to get an idea of the women role and status in all the social institutions.

²²⁴ Leonard Bickman, Roj, Debra J, *Applied Social Research Methods* 2nd ed.(Los Angeles SAGE Publications, 2009).553.

²²⁵ Frank E Hagan, *Research Methods in Criminal Justice and Criminology*, 6th ed.(Boston, USA: Allyn and Bacon 2006).220.

²²⁶Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* .185.

²²⁷ Ibid.185.

While, the disadvantage of this method is “going native” wherein a researcher adopts the view point of the group and loses his/her own interpretation of the events but to address the issue, efforts were made to describe the social organization of the locals from their own point of view and then were analyzed as researcher. This problem of nativity was overcome by the techniques that an ethnographer performs his/her role as complete participant or participant- as- observer but in our research, researcher role was of observer or some time observer as the participant. So with conscious analysis, it was tried to avoid being going native because it should not be assumed that going native was an inevitable risk associated with ethnography²²⁸. In addition, it was also possible for the researcher to develop negative feelings for the subject being study but to avoid such feelings during the data collection, the researcher tried to develop a neutral posture instead of directing the situation. As “Neutral posture allows researcher to understand what is going on around rather than become either advocates or critics”,²²⁹.

As ethics are a system of moral principles, so it was tried to consider research ethics during whole study process. During the field work and discussions with the respondents, if it happened, all ethical standards were kept in mind to avoid any annoying questions. Moreover, assurance of the confidentiality of the collected data and information and confining them to the research purpose only, was necessary. This was the reason that the researcher chose an overt nature of study so that the respondents could understand her although after telling actual cause, nature and purpose of the study, sometimes, it became difficult to collect data. As for as, nature and extent of problem was concerned, will be discussed with other problems of research.

²²⁸Bryman, *Social Research Methods*.p.302

²²⁹Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* .p.179.

4.3 Data Analysis

Analysis helps to examine in detail in order to discover meanings and essential features etc. For analysis purpose, all the written record was re-arranged and notes from audio recordings were also made. Afterwards, further refined division of lesser and greater Cholistan were made to bring the data in shape for comparison. At first, all the relevant responses were accumulated and an ethnographic picture was made based on the collected information and own observations from the study area. Then the researcher cultivated a description of roles and status of women in different social institutions of Cholistan based on accumulated data and observation to capture whole life of women. In this way, the researcher became able to portrait women's life and change in their life in Cholistan. After description of findings to boost up the utility of gathered facts, analysis of facts was summarized.

4.4 Problems Faced

During study, a number of problems were faced such as access to area of the study especially in greater Cholistan. Vehicular transportation was always needed to access the tough area of desert, a guide was also needed all the time because there were no proper and defined routes to reach the destination even there was life threat in case of losing the way. As it was an overt nature of study, the researcher did not conceal her identity and had element of acceptance as insider as she could speak in their language. But after all, the researcher was an outsider for them who was not a member of their own community and considered different due to having some differences like education and ethnicity. In close societies, like desert communities, outsiders can be immediately identified. There was a major problem of countenance and non-cooperative behavior of some respondents at first but it was managed by letting them know about the objectives of the study.

The people of Cholistan have always been dependent upon outside support in terms of food, money, clothes and medicines etc. given by foreigner/visitors as well as local authorities. For example, they have been provided with the land and electricity on subsidized prices. Similarly, free provision of many other commodities has been made to improve their current life conditions. This has built a particular type of attitude and habit of obtaining something from an outsider and when their expectations are not seemingly materialized, they lose their interest in providing any sort of information. They also had some bitter experiences of being interviewed with the promise of reward but could not get anything. Hence, it has made them fed up of giving interview or any sort of information to the outsider. But the thing that went to researchers' favour was the old age of women, the respondents of the study, who were usually found of telling stories and sharing their life experiences.

5. Chapter-V: Woman and Marriage, Family and Religious

Institutions in Cholistan

This chapter has been divided into three parts. In the first part, it discusses the marriage institution and related customs and tradition of the institution of marriage in Cholistan. In the second part, it enlightens the family institution in detail while the third part gives the detailed note on religious institution.

5.1 Part-1: Women and Marriage Institution in Cholistan

In the nomadic societies, mutual relationships and social bonds are strong and deep enough to provide basis for social cohesion. In the absence of institutional services and technological facilities in Cholistan, deep-rooted mutual relationships and familial ties provide necessary help and care for survival in the harsh climatic and geographic conditions of desert. One of such care providing institution is marriage in the Cholistan

“Marriage is based on civil and religious authority to solemnize the union of a man and a woman and legalizes the parentage of the offsprings born to the family as a result of the marriage. Based on the socio-economic status of the families concerned, the practices often include the formal change of residence of one party, mostly the woman from her parental family. Formal and rich feasts to the near and dear ones and even the community, exchanges of precious gifts between the couple, and the families, a formal documentation or verbal commitment to live in peace and harmony, and the re-entry of the newlyweds into society²³⁰.

Marriage is a socially approved arrangement between a male and a female that involves an economic and sexual relationship²³¹,” Traditionally, marriage has been the best arrangement for the fulfilment of many social, economic and emotional needs of the individuals. In the nomadic societies, institution of marriage is performing multiple

²³⁰. Microsoft Corporation, "Marriage," in *Encarta* (2009).

²³¹. John E. Farley, *Sociology*, 2nd ed.(New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1992).p.375.

functions. Contrary to the some modern societies, in the conservative and tradition bounded nomadic societies, procreation is accepted only through marriage.

5.1.1 Marriage in Cholistan

In Cholistan, procreation is socially accepted only after marriage which serves as binding force that keeps family and clan together. Major part of life revolves around fulfilment of basic needs like drinking water, food, health and shelter in the Cholistan. In such hostile conditions, marriage is considered to be one of the major achievements and happiness in the life of Cholistan, where a significant majority of population is nomadic and leading their life in traditional way. Therefore, marriage is the collective concern of two families rather than two individuals. Marriage is celebrated and observed with excitement along with little variation in the customs and traditions in both lesser and greater Cholistan.

5.1.2 Types of Marriage

In nomadic societies, marriages are monogamous, endogamous and patrilocal and are mostly arranged by exchange or purchase, quite align with the traditions of Cholistan. In the past, in the Cholistan, all the marriages were arranged ones and there was no choice for bride or groom to express their liking and disliking in the selection of life partner. Since Cholistan's population is multilingual and multi-religious, therefore, marriages are preferred in one's own religious and linguistic group. Forty years back there were different types of marriage in Cholistan; one of the popular forms of marriage was *watta satta* (exchange marriage) which was preferably done within the close relatives. *Watta satta* is a bride exchange practice which literally means barter or give and take, usually involves the simultaneous marriage of a male-female pair from two households²³². If a proposal was not found for girl in exchange, sometime Cholistanis did not marry that girl and she had to spend her whole life in celibacy.

²³²HG Jacoby and G Mansuri, "Watta Satta: Exchange Marriage and Women's Welfare in Rural Pakistan", Mimeograph, "The World Bank (2005).37.

Till-date, there are many forms of *watta satta* in the Cholistan such as child marriages and *pait-likhai* (commitment of marriage before birth of a baby girl). In some cases, when there is no girl for exchange in a family but yet there is any expectant woman, a promise is made that if the next baby born in the family would be a girl, she would be given in exchange. In-case, there is no expecting woman in the groom family, they made a promise that if and when baby girl would be born to the bride, she would be given in exchange to the bride family.

In another practice, when there is no female for exchange within close relatives, any distant relative could offer his/her daughter for exchange. Likewise, a girl can also be purchased for a groom. There are few castes such as Saraiki Pathan, Kutwal and Utreaw in the Cholistan who sold their daughters for marriage against some money. If the groom's parents did not have enough money for paying bride, in some families it became collective responsibility of the whole family/clan to contribute for meeting the amount. This practice is locally known as *Phori*. These types of marriages reflect that procreation is the most important purpose of the marriage among Cholistanis.

5.1.3 Decision Making of Marriage

Forty years back in the Cholistan, marriage was a joint responsibility of all the family members rather than an individual (bride/groom). While decision making of a marriage, willingness of bride and groom was not given any importance. It was entirely a matter of family of orientation and family of procreation²³³. Ideally, a girl as well as a boy was expected to abide by the social norm of not challenging the decision made by male members either fathers, brothers or uncles in the family. This level of submissiveness by women was considered a matter of pride by elder men of the family.

²³³Buford Rhea Lewis A. Coser, Patricia A. Steffan Stven L.Nock, *Introduction to Sociology*(New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich,Inc, 1983).276.

It was elder members of the family who decided all the matters of marriage such as age, date, invitation to relatives, friends and type food for the guests attending marriage. All expenditures of marriage were thought to be combined responsibility of whole family. Other than male head of family, *numberdar* (village head man) and male member of *bradri*/clan had also a say in decision making. The involvement of *numberdar* in decision making was likely to be a guarantee as he could impose the decision forcefully when any party deviates from it. Once decided, the entire family and clan became bound to materialize the decision through thick and thin. It was culturally considered as the matter of honour and respect for both men and women to abide by the decision made regarding marriage.

In the current scenario, people in greater Cholistan still abide by traditions and consider it immoral to end up the engagement whereas in lesser Cholistan, some deviations in these practices are observed by the researcher. In all these matters, women are bounded to behave like silent spectators and not supposed to express themselves. The gathering of male members regarding such decisions also consists of outsiders like *numberdar* but participation of women on such occasions is discouraged. They are asked for observing *pardah* (veil) and seclusion from outsiders is considered mandatory for them.

In lesser Cholistan, there are some changes in this practice. Now, elderly women (grandmother) or mother is given a little importance to the level that they are informed about decision made so that they might get ready for playing their role in the forthcoming event.

5.1.4 Marriage Age

In the Cholistan, practice of endogamy, exchange marriages and marriage by purchase has deep and far reaching effects on the social life of women. Under such systems, a woman is merely a commodity for exchange or sale and purchase; she has nothing to say

anything about her welfare. Under these modes of marriage, young girls are wed-locked with old men. In some cases, it was observed that father got married in exchange of his daughter. Little attention is paid to age, personality and other similar characteristics of bride and groom other than being male and female. Women of Hindu community proudly claimed that: “*Sadi dhyan nhi boldyan jehojya risthta kito*” Our daughters never speak about where ever her marriage is decided.

The arranged marriages are also cause for the practice of early marriages. Sometimes marriage of a girl is decided even before her own birth or even before the marriage of her mother. This practice is very popular among Hindus especially. Among Hindus, in such cases the marriages are celebrated as usual but the bride after departure to the groom house, returns to her parents’ home after spending few days with in-laws and stays at parental home until the stage of puberty. It is marked by genital maturation, development of secondary sex characteristics, and, in girls the first occurrence of menstruation. On reaching puberty which is determined by the first menses, she permanently joins her husband with little more celebrations. The normal marriage age of girls among Hindus varies between 13-16 years and among Muslims suitable age for female marriage is 15-18 years.

5.1.5 Celebrations of Marriage

In the past as well as presently, marriage is an important social gathering and one of the most celebrated social events for people of Cholistan. There are hardly any recreational opportunities and get together with people living away from one’s own *toba*. Therefore, marriage, being a long awaited event, is celebrated zealously. After fixation of proposal, marriage date is finalized with mutual consent of both the families. Although families of both bride and groom invite relatives and friends on marriage but major gathering is called upon by groom’s family. All the relatives are invited at least one week before marriage and they

stay with the host family for nearly two weeks, but maternal and paternal aunts are invited several weeks before marriage day. They are supposed to extend help in preparing dowry and making other arrangement such as food and stay for the guests. Generally, during marriage days, men do more physical hard work whereas women are active in performing folkways. During the course of marriage, *kammis* (menial) are available for doing any laborious work.

In the past, arranging marriage of the children was considered to be one of the important parental responsibilities. For meeting financial expenditures and hospitality of invitees, households raise some extra animals for marriage, both for selling and slaughtering. When marriage date was fixed, a woollen rope was given ties equal to the remaining days of marriage reason being the unavailability of proper calendar, so one tie was untied every day for the remaining days of marriage. This helped to not miss the exact day. This practice is till date continued in greater Cholistan and in some parts of lesser Cholistan. Due to scorching heat in summer, marriage is arranged in winter or spring season. At once, usually 4-5 couples are married because it is not easy job to arrange and attend marriage in greater Cholistan where there are no means of transportation except camels. After the fixation of marriage, both bride and groom keep an iron made item mostly knife with them for protection of devils which can attack them due to marriage. Besides other special dishes, all the guests are served with *jalebyan* (a kind of sweet) during their stay at groom's house. *Waleema* (marriage meal) is arranged one day before going to bride's home. Groom is made to wear special and colourful dress and is central figure in the whole gathering. On the marriage day, groom's sister fills a specially decorated pitcher called *gharoli* with water in the procession of many women. Groom took bath with it, but presently just face is washed with that pitcher water. Before leaving for bride home, groom is asked to break many pitcher lids as show-off of his physical power. In the past, both bride and groom used to colour their hands and feet with

mehndi but presently, bride does so while groom colours one finger just to observe the tradition.

Groom travels to bride home with marriage procession consisting of men, women and children. Bride family welcomes them and offers feast. There was no practice of documenting the *Nikkah* (marriage contract), only *imam* (prayer leader) made read the *kalma* to the bride and groom and pray for the post marriage happiness of married couple. However currently, *nikkah* is registered at many places. Marriage procession stay at bride's home for one night and next day goes back, while presently groom returns back on the same day. All the participants put on special clothes on marriage day. An elderly woman make plays bride and groom different games before marriage processions leave for groom home.

In the lesser Cholistan, invitees stay for less time as compared to greater Cholistan. All the customs and traditions of the marriage were same like in greater Cholistan. In the past, marriage procession could go on camel carts because some time there was track near the home of host family. At present in the lesser Cholistan, vans and buses are hired for groom and guests for reaching bride's home. In many cases, marriage procession goes on bikes. Presently, in the lesser Cholistan, if family is financially affording, marriage house is decorated with lights and tents are hired for making the invitees stay comfortable. Since in large area, there is no electrification, so generator is temporarily hired for the provision of electricity

Women have key role in arrangements of marriage, since they are not included in decision making but once a decision is made, then they had to shoulder many responsibilities. Women are to prepare quilts, bed sheets and certain embroidered dresses for bride. Women also welcome the invitees and play facilitative role for making their stay comfortable within the available resources. The elder lady takes care of food and asks everybody about having food at the meal time.

5.1.6 Dowry

Dowry is the common practice on marriages in Cholistan. The custom of dowry is so long lasting and deep rooted that in few cases it is strongly demanded from the groom family. This is also reflection of inferior status of women in the Cholistan. Since women have a low status, therefore through dowry, husband is indirectly purchased for her or a man is obliged by this way to accept the girl's hand as a wife. Since Muslims and Hindus have been living together in the Indo-Pak for centuries and cultural diffusion has taken place. That is why many Hindus customs have also been adopted by the Muslims, one such custom is dowry. There are different explanations to this act, some think of it as compensation of possible female burden on groom's family²³⁴.

In the past, different household items were given as dowry to the bride in the Cholistan; such as in greater Cholistan there was trend of giving 30-40 *Ghaghra* (an umbrella type frock) and animals such as sheep, goats, cows and camels. Practice of giving animals as dowry was in line with post marriage needs of the married couples, they did not need furniture or other such items due to nomadic life style. Silver made ornaments were important part of dowry in olden times. Previously, giving 2-3 kilo grams silver made ornaments was popular custom. Comparatively, financially well off patents also added few gold made ornaments like *Popa* (nose pin) and *Challa* (a thin finger ring), whereas rest of jewelry used to be silver made.

From past, dowry in the lesser Cholistan consist of some different items such as *ghaghra*, *shalwar qameez*, simple furniture such as wooden bedstead, handkerchiefs, *parana* while cosmetics and shoes were given from groom side. In addition, crockery, tin-boxes, bed covers, quilts and certain other casual items of daily use were included in dowry.

²³⁴. Conrad Phillip Kottak, *Anthropology: The Exploration of Human Diversity* 2nd ed.(Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2002).409.

It was dependent on financial statuses of bride family but every family made best efforts to give maximum dowry.

Practice of dowry in Cholistan has witnessed changes over last forty years. At present, mostly people give gold ornaments instead of silver ones in lesser Cholistan; similarly imitation jewelry is also getting place in Cholistan which was not even known forty years back. There is a notable cut on number of giving animals as dowry as compared to the past. Moreover, there is addition of some basic furniture in the greater Cholistan.

5.1.7 Symbolic Reflection of Marital Status of Women

In Cholistan, marriage determines the role and status of women for post marriage life. In both parts of Cholistan, there are specific signs and symbols like specific designs of jewelry, foot rings and bangles which reflect the marital status of a women. Such as forty years back in both parts of Cholistan, unmarried women could wear *shalwar qameez*. After marriage she was not allowed to wear this dress and wearing *ghaghra* became compulsory dress for them. Married women put on heavy silver foot rings and bangles weighing ten to twenty *tolas* (1 *tola* is equal to 12 grams) all the times and removed only after the death of her husband.

Some families also gave a black *ghaghra* in dowry with the belief that if she would become a widow, would put on that one. Hindus living in Cholistan were more conscious about symbolic identity of marital status of women. Other than above mentioned symbols, they also had some different reflections in their culture. They used to put *sandoor* (red colour powder) in front partition of their hairs. Unmarried girl could not wear half or quarter sleeves. Only married women could wear half and three quarter sleeves shirts.

This situation is continuing till date especially in case of greater Cholistan. Women put on specific dresses with described colours and similarly jewelry which reflect their marital status.

5.1.8 Polygamy

Cholistan, being a nomadic and traditional society has only fewer examples of polygamy which discouraged. There are several reasons for large scale practice of monogamy in the Cholistan. Firstly, there is massive practice of joint family system in the Cholistan which put social pressure for continuation of first marriage, so despite many differences on the part of husband and wife, they do not divorce each other. Secondly, there is widespread poverty which makes affordability of polygamy beyond the reach of Cholistani people. Thirdly, exchange marriage is hurdle in re-marrying, marriage of one side would disturb both the families.

Polygamy is carried out only on certain religious and social grounds. A vast majority of population living in Cholistan is Muslim and Islam does permit polygamy only in case if a man cannot maintain justice and equal treatment with all of his wives. Other reasons for remarriage include childlessness of the couple while in some cases having no male child, widowhood of a young woman in the family particularly of elder or younger brother's wife. The decision for remarriage is also taken by the parents or joint family of the groom as the case may be. In greater Cholistan, celibacy is also permitted after the death of spouse.

In the past, a widow among Hindus had to jump in fire along with the cremation of the dead body of her husband; this custom is called *satti*. That is why till today, In Hindu culture, existence of a widow is a perceived as sign of misfortune. In olden days and even in many parts of contemporary India, widows have to go for *satti* but in Pakistan no such custom is found or allowed since 1773 when the Britons under East India Company banned the custom and declared it tantamount to a killing²³⁵.

²³⁵William Bentinck, the Governor General East India Company. (Report)

5.1.9 Divorce

In Cholistan, whether greater or lesser, marriage has been a collective matter of whole family but not an individual or personal choice. In case of any conflict between the spouses, family intervened and the conflict was resolved amicably. Under such conditions, divorce is non-existing. Separation between husband and wife is tolerable in some cases but not divorce. The exchange marriage system and marriage by purchase also act as hindrance to practice of divorce as in case of divorcing wife; sister or daughter of husband had also to suffer which would create greater social pressure on the husband's family. Now a days, divorce is equally considered an act of displeasure and always looked down upon, moreover, it is thought be an insult for a woman. It is taken as a shameful and immoral act. Some sort of social stigmas are attached to the person who divorces her wife, and she is called as *talaqi* (divorcee) who is not socially acceptable. If a woman is not happy with her husband and she goes back to her parent's home, ultimately she has to return back to his husband's home in align with the traditional saying of Cholistan; "*Dhee behen apny ghar sohni lagdi ay*" Daughters and sisters are better off in their husband's home.

Social change has made divorce cases evident in lesser Cholistan and too few cases were also observed by the researcher in greater Cholistan. Now binding force of family and clan is getting weaker so sometimes individuals found themselves strong enough to ignore social pressure from family. Most cases of divorce are among those couples wherein wife was brought from out of *Rohi*. In such cases, divorcee male is neither socially boycotted nor there is any social stigma. It is also practiced that in case of divorce; few women got re-married with any other member of husband's family. Hindus have a thinking that married women best suits at her in-laws home in any case. The concept of a successful woman is the one who bears all the sufferings but never broke the relationship with her husband and in-laws. The man from whom a woman demands divorce is considered to be as weak and

shameless person and faces much criticism from the society. It is matter of pride for such man who does not divorce her first wife and goes for polygyny.

5.1.10 Widowhood

Widowhood has adverse effect on life of women of Cholistan. In Cholistani society, people are much conscious about marital status of women and there are specific dresses and colours that speak about whether a woman is married, un-married or widow.

Forty years ago, only light or black coloured clothes were worn by widows. A widow could not wear dark, shining and attractive colours and jewelry, although women of Cholistan were very much fond of colourful dress and jewelry. It was customary to remove the jewelry of a woman after death of her husband, except small ear rings were allowed in some cases. Hindus were strict in this practice. Among Hindus, a widow was thought to be a cursed and misfortune. This very belief of Hindus has disseminated among Muslims as well and widow was considered as misfortunate. She was not happily allowed to participate in social gatherings and celebrations. But among both Muslims and Hindus, elderly widow was respected. Widowhood in elderly women was not considered unlucky. As a result of superstition, widows were discriminated on many social occasions with the belief of her being misfortunate woman, so her presence and participation in any ceremony was considered baleful. That was why all the customary practices of marriage were performed by a *sohagan* (a married woman leading her life happily with her husband). Among the Muslim widows in Cholistan, second marriage or remarriage was difficult but possible in lesser Cholistan, which mostly took place within the in-laws. Hindu widows had to face a harsh social attitude throughout her widowhood because second marriage was strictly not allowed.

Though Cholistan is traditional nomadic society and till the day, widow wears light or black colour dress, but as a result of social change, feelings of hatred towards her as

cursed person has decreased now. In lesser Cholistan, marriage of young widow is getting social acceptance. But till date, widow is criticised on expression of happiness and pleasure, so she has to avoid the participation in ceremonial gatherings.

5.1.11 Change in Customs and Practices of Marriage

Social change has influenced the marriage institution in Cholistan to more or less extent. As discussed earlier, popular types of marriage in Cholistan includes exchanging and purchasing brides. At present, deep rooted trend of exchange marriage by purchasing bride is declining with changing patterns in earning sources. Now such youngsters, who fled away to urban areas and work for cash in factories or earning from other some income generating sources in the urban areas, are more inclined to exogamous mode of marriage. This means that the strong customs of endogamy are being replaced with exogamy particularly in lesser Cholistan. Not only endogamy is threatened, hyper- gamy and hypo- gamy are also getting social acceptance. This situation has liberated women a bit from the strong clutches of the traditional sale and purchase or exchange of woman. In such system, a woman is like an object of sale and exchanges not a human being even for expression of her feelings. In very rare cases, the researcher also found that Cholistani people arranged their daughter's marriage out of family.

But, the trend of early child marriage is still being practiced particularly among the Hindus. The trend of *pait-lihkai* has decreased but not vanished totally. The trend is still pervasive in the greater Cholistan as compared to lesser Cholistan.

Due to more exposure with people from settled areas, presently too few people in lesser Cholistan have started to accept proposal from outside the family or clan. This trend has given the choice in marriage and selection of spouse to new generation. On one hand, this trend is beneficial for people of Cholistan but on the other hand, it is also warping the

traditional culture where there was no divorce. Now, divorce to women is acceptable to some extent especially when women belong to out of Cholistan

Over the last forty years, practices of marriage have undergone many changes. This social change was not equal in all parts of Cholistan. In lesser Cholistan, marriage customs and practices have changed more as compared to greater Cholistan. There are some traditions which were well established and still persistent without any visible change. Just like last forty years ago, marriage has been only a family or clan concern rather than personal one; this practice did not undergo any major change. That was why in decision making of marriages, seeking consent of bride and groom is still not being considered as important. Moreover, it is understood as a matter of pride that youngsters especially women in Cholistan, blindly follow the decisions of parents and elders.

At present a little importance is given to liking and disliking of male but still, there is no concept of talking the consent of a girl for sorting out her willingness. This is the perception about the ideal role of women that they should be only decision-abiding rather than decision makers.

It is the prerogative of the family heads from both sides (bride and groom) to decide when and with whom marriage would take place. Marriage is considered to be a casual decision made by the elder male members of the family. Now, involvement of *numberdar* is decreasing and decision making is being shifted mainly to the close relatives rather than whole family. But still there is little consideration of family choice; otherwise family had to face criticism from relatives and locality.

Cholistan is a typical patriarchal society with joint family which makes the family a most important institution in Cholistan. Now, in lesser Cholistan, the elderly woman of the family like grandmother or mother is informed about every important decision being made.

This is one of the major changes that have occurred during the past half century. Now, the elderly women try to convince her husband and sons for her say in the decision making.

Women in Cholistan were dependent for making decision in the post married life. But, now they convince their male members especially husband and sons for implementation of their decisions. Once male members would own her willingness, then it would be executed. Involvement of women in decisions making by this indirect way is reflective of social change.

The practice of dower and dowry is also rapidly changing. Now type and quantity of items given as dowry have changed. Similarly in the past, silver ornaments were fashion than gold ornaments, but now gold is given preference in dowry and is demanded as dowry from the groom family.

5.2 Part-II: Women and Family Institution in Cholistan

Since there are no formal and institutional services in the Cholistan, therefore, survival of an individual is entirely dependent upon the care and protection extended by family members. Nomadism demonstrates a particular type of subsistence pattern which is defined as a best way of adaptation of certain populations to their total environment²³⁶ where family is the most significant institution for fulfilling basic human needs. Family has been defined in a variety of ways by different sociologists. It consists of a group of blood relatives; it extends to cousins, grandparents, uncles and aunts and even those people with whom we have poor contact, so objectively it can be said that a small group of people closely related and sharing a distinct sense of identity as well as responsibility that signifies their commitments to other members. Mostly this group is based on marriage, biological descendants or adoption²³⁷.

Generally a family consists of a male, one or more females, and

²³⁶Brian Spooner, *The Cultural Ecology of Pastoral Nomads*(Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1973).p.3

²³⁷John Scott James Fulcher, *Sociology* 2nd ed.(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).445.

children, with one or more relatives²³⁸, providing all the universal needs such as food, shelter, love and affection, sexual relationships through marriage, procreation, social identity and socialization²³⁹.

Family as a social institution performs many primary functions as it is the first reference group of a child. Sociologists view family as a place for primary socialisation for the children. Children learn the ways of interaction as well as formal and informal norms of social interaction from their families²⁴⁰. A child adopts the norms and values of a society through a family. It is the family which introduces a child to the group life. While living in the family means that one will learn to share several resources within a family such as space, objects and parental time²⁴¹.

In the Cholistan, role of family has increased many folds due to absence of formal institutions like schools, hospitals, child care institutions. Due to remote location and geographical aloofness, direct access from and to Cholistan was difficult; therefore, people in Cholistan are helpless for depending only on the available limited resources. Under these conditions, human beings and relationships with them in different forms are the greatest blessing for nomads living in Cholistan, without which their survival in desert life is beyond imagination. Among these human relationships, family is strongest bond in that society. In Cholistan, nomadic life style has increased the need and importance of family and its role as a vitally supporting institution. It provides basis for human survival in harder social, economic and climatic conditions. In the Cholistan, family performs varied functions such as love, personal identity; health care, economic support and any other needed help for

²³⁸. Dr. M. Sabihuuddin Baqai, *Social Order in Pakistani Society*(Karachi: MAS Publisher, 1985).276.

²³⁹. Ibid.274.

²⁴⁰. Steven Horwitz, "The Functions of the Family in the Great Society," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 29, no. 5 (2005).675.

²⁴¹. Donald Light Craig Calhoun, Suzanne Keller, *Sociology*, 6th ed.(New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994).114.

survival in a hostile environment of desert which is not supportive for its inhabitants for survival.

5.2.1 Family System in Cholistan

Nomads in Cholistan are patriarchal, patrilineal, patrilocal, practice joint and extended family systems, elder men lead the entire clan and families and that women have a secondary position in the society etc. Gypsies have sustained extended family system and elderly people are given high social status²⁴².

There is patriarchal family system in Cholistan. All the tasks are jointly shared by all the family members. Mostly, elderly men in the family are decision making authority in all family matters. Elderly woman of the family are highly respected and supervises all the domestic chores. All the females are subordinate to the elderly women while she herself is under control of her husband and male members.

Family structure is an important determinant of its functions and nature of relationships within it. As geographical and climatic conditions of Cholistan demanded for more close ties within the family as compared to settled areas. Therefore in the given situation, joint family system automatically becomes ideal choice for the people of Cholistan, so joint family system is a strong system as compared to nuclear family system. In joint family system, 2-3 generations live together constituting a single unit in which grandparents, their married children and grandchildren, also sometimes great grandchildren, cousins, uncles and aunts live²⁴³.

In terms of economic security, every one earns according to his capacities and consume according to his needs. Nuclear family system reflects self-dependency and self-sufficiency of married couple which was not possible with the scarce resources and hard

²⁴² Lane, Pauline, Siobhan Spencer, and Muzelley McCready. *Perspectives on ageing in Gypsy families*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, (2012).

²⁴³ Charlotte Kursh, "The Family and Social Change: A Study of Family and Kinship in a South Wales Town," *Family Process* 5, no. 1 (1966).21.

living conditions of Cholistan. Household is the basic social unit which may contain either nuclear or extended family system²⁴⁴. Over last forty years, joint cum extended family system is the most popular and widely adopted in Cholistan. When we peep into the past of Cholistan, a strong and sound existence of extended family system was prominent social feature. People lived together and mutual dependency on each and every matter was very common. Women cooked together and men collectively supported and sustained social life. People of Cholistan recalled this intense unity with sadness; “*Iko wakh hondy sy khushi gam daa akath hai*” We were living collectively in both situations; happiness and sadness.

In Greater Cholistan, family system manifests an interesting mixture of joint and extended family system. A separate *ghopa* is given to newly married couple but they had to share common kitchen for food with rest of the family members. The joint family system in Cholistan is more inclined to and exhibits characteristics of extended family system.

5.2.2 Change in Family System

During last four decades, traditional family system in Cholistan has changed and joint family system has been replaced with nuclear family system. Particularly this change is more visible in the lesser Cholistan on the account of changing economic conditions there. The allotment of state lands for agriculture purpose at different locations in lesser Cholistan has resulted in settled agro-economy and the split of the joint family into nuclear one. This change was felt by people of Cholistan and they expressed it in these words: “*Hun pahly wali gal ko, har koi apo ap aie*” Now it is not like past, now everybody is self-dependent.

In traditional society of Cholistan, adoption of nuclear family system did not mean its practice with true spirit such as in many developed societies. They have strong bonds within family despite living in separate houses. In many cases, some members of family

²⁴⁴. Spooner, *The Cultural Ecology of Pastoral Nomads*.28.

settled in the urban areas for availing education and health facilities. This shift in family system has facilitated youngsters in lesser Cholistan for easy access to educational facilities. In addition, in case of ailment, people can access a qualified physician easily as compared to past due to having one family residing in urban areas. This system can be better explained as „two houses“ system than nuclear family system.

5.2.3 Change in the Functions of Family

Family plays several important functions in the life of an individual in the Cholistan; here is description of important functions with the change that has taken place over last forty years.

5.2.4 Food, Shelter and Social Support

Just like everywhere, the basic functions of the family in Cholistan include procreation sustainability of human race and Cholistan is no exception. Most important function of family includes provision of basic necessities of life like shelter, food, security and psychological needs like love and affection. Forty years back, no institutional service was available to the people of Cholistan for up-bringing their children but presently children are indirectly beneficiaries of some rarely available services like hospital and school to them. The functions of the family are described by local people as: *“Jaman tun la ty marn taeen khandan ee saryan loran pori karenda ay”* From birth to death, it is the family which fulfils all the needs.

Other functions of family include social identity and social support in crises²⁴⁵. In Cholistan too, family has given its members identification; a child as a person is recognized by its family and tribe. All pride and identity is symbol of caste which stems from kinship lineage. Social status of a person is determined by family but in lesser Cholistan, some

²⁴⁵. Murli Desai, *A Rights-Based Preventative Approach for Psychosocial Well-Being in Childhood*, vol. 3(Springer, 2010).227.

people who have attained education and economic betterment, therefore are bit detached from previous social identity and family.

Coupled with this, family also provides religious awareness of the individual members. In the Cholistan, individuals just adopt the religion as member of a certain family to which they born and belong to Hindu or Muslim religion. Though, the researcher observed that they are not much practicing of religion but strongly affiliated with the religion due to the following of the family.

5.2.5 Economic Support

Universally, family fulfils the economic needs of the individuals for a certain period of time but in joint family system of Cholistan, family has to shoulder this responsibility throughout life. That is why people in Cholistan are not worried about earning for supporting themselves or their wives and children. Family is always there to fulfil their basic needs within available resources and locally set standards. This is one of the reasons of early marriages because they do not wait for male to get financially stable for provision of basic needs and necessities of wife and children. In the developed and settled areas, there are different economic opportunities for individuals in public or private sector while in desert of Cholistan, the only economic source is animal husbandry, therefore youngsters automatically join the on-going economic activity of the family.

As a result of improvement in the transportation system, many people work in the towns as daily wagers, permanent employees in government and private organization and have permanent jobs and hence various source of income. But, the greater Cholistan is still deprived of such opportunities.

5.2.6 Educational Support

In the Cholistan, forty years back, people were not aware about formal educational institutions, their need, importance and functions. At that time family served as informal

institution and equipped its members with necessary knowledge and skills needed to spend life in the desert. As human being, they needed some skills for survival and spending life which was entirely dependent on family. Family provided its members with different necessary skills in the informal fashion like digging and maintaining *toba*, preparing *ghopa* and carrying out animal husbandry and local medication for the sick fellows and animals. People living in greater Cholistan are still lacking the formal educational institutions.

Since the establishment of CDA, formal education has also been introduced in Cholistan. At present, there are some 226 schools including primary to secondary level with more than 11, 985 students in all classes. Out of this total number, 10,028 students are male while 1957 are female students²⁴⁶. This increasing trend of formal education has changed the role of women. Now in addition to their routine household chores like cleaning, washing, child care and babysitting, milking and taking care of animals; women also prepare and send their children to schools. This role of women is limited to some families in the lesser Cholistan areas. In addition to the formal education, now mothers also sent their children to the nearby mosques and religious seminaries for acquisition of religious knowledge.

5.2.7 Health Care

Forty years back, in lesser and greater Cholistan, family provided health care in terms of financial help and arranging local herbal doctor/*hakeem* and medicines where health facilities were non-existent. At that time, Cholistani people were dependent upon local medicinal plants for treatment of health related problems. As a matter of fact, in Cholistan area, generally diseases are less and minor which can be treated at local level. In certain cases, when someone was severe ill, family members, who could afford physically and financially. They took the patient to any health centre and had to travel for tens of miles

²⁴⁶Cholistan Development Authority, office record (2013)

by foot along with the sick person. There were no proper transport facilities, particularly in the greater Cholistan for taking patient to the health centre. This same situation still persists in greater Cholistan.

In the lesser Cholistan, role of family in health care has increased. It is the family that endeavours to search for cure and remedies in any case; either, in the form of ethno-medication, taking amulets, hospitalization or reaching a physician. At present, since the establishment of CDA, 9 Basic Health Units and 02 dispensaries have been established for provision of health facilities for the people of Cholistan²⁴⁷ but the health delivery system is still very poor and these facilities are insufficient. Mostly, the health centres are without adequate staff and medicines. Lack of staff is due to reason that people living in urban areas do not like to serve in the far flung areas with harsh climatic conditions. Consequently, financially well off people from lesser Cholistan can approach the urban health facilities located nearly 100 miles away.

5.2.8 Roles and Relationships in Family

Just like in whole of Pakistan, patriarchal family system is found in the Cholistan. Two major types of family are found in nomadic societies, extended patriarchal family and the smaller joint patriarchal family in the Cholistan²⁴⁸. In the known cases of nomadism, technology of pastoralism revolves around men²⁴⁹, so father or any elderly man mostly heads the family and women are supposed to perform domestic chores and care for animals, children and aged ones.

Head of the family ensures general social functioning and survival of the family in the tough environment of Cholistan. He has to make and implement all important decisions

²⁴⁷Cholistan Development Authority, office record (2013)

²⁴⁸Harvey J. Locke Ernest W. Burgess, Mary Margaret Thomes, *The Family from Institution to Companionship*, 3rd ed.19.

²⁴⁹Spooner, *The Cultural Ecology of Pastoral Nomads*.26.

about the family. The head is responsible for arranging food for family members, looking after the family property and provision of protection and security to its family members as well as fulfilling all economic needs which are uphill tasks in Cholistan. Furthermore, head of the family has an important role in socialization of the children. He is custodians of the traditions and customs of the family. Besides, he is also to ensure transmission of culture to the next generation.

Father is the most respected person in the family but his relationship with children is very limited in terms of direct interaction. Daughters are expected to show respect and humbleness and must be submissive to their fathers. Sons also hesitate in sharing anything freely with father; though, they have deep and frank relationship with their younger uncles and brothers.

5.2.8.1 Elderly Persons in the Family

In the traditional and joint families in Pakistan, age is one of the factors which determine social status of a person. Grannies in particular and nannies in general, both in rural as well as urban areas, earn extra respect on this base in the life and can make decisions which are honoured and accepted by all family members.

They are given an ear by every member of the family as they are considered to be wise and experienced²⁵⁰. In the olden days disobeying a grandmother or elderly woman was considered as a bad omen and a sign of misfortune. She has a sound role in raising and socializing her grandkids as she transfers her life experience along with societal values and traditions to next generation. In Cholistan, women have also to help in raising livestock along with domestic chores, so they have to move out of home for arranging fodder or taking care of animals, in such times grandmother is responsible for care of children at home and provides them with motherly care. In the male dominated society, where head of

²⁵⁰. Antonio Rota, "Women and Pastoralism," (Rome, Italy: International Fund for Agricultural Development 2012).

the family pays no or little ear to the opinion of the wife or daughter, he displays silence in front of his grandmother and her words are given relatively more importance. Grandmother also plays an important role in arranging marriages of her grandsons and daughters. In case of any conflict among the family members, she could scold to the faulty person and made reconciliation to maintain unity in the family. She supervises all the household chores carried out by her daughter in law and children. She also represents her family where male considers female representation as necessary.

5.2.8.2 Role and Status of Mother

Universally, mother has a divine role to up bring her children and no other role is so important for taking care and socializing the children as that of mother. Similarly in Cholistan, mother has a traditional and central role in the family from history. She faces more challenges for taking care of children and family in the absence of institutional services in the desert. She has to look after the children and fulfil family needs of food and drinking water. She serves as head in carrying out domestic chores as she divides responsibilities between youngster female in the family like daughter and daughter in law. Furthermore, she also implements the decisions made by head of the family. In absence of formal educational set up, she has a primary role in transforming informal knowledge and skills to the children. This helps the new generation to sustain and support their life in hard conditions of Cholistan and create consistency with social life of Cholistan. She trains daughters for performing household duties in the nomadic life style.

Mother is more close to her children as she also fulfils all unsaid needs of her children as much as she can. Mostly daughters in Cholistan are not demanding. Mothers give extra care to their sons as sometime in form of giving them extra food or milk. At present child bearing, caring and maintenance of home is still responsibility of mother. In lesser Cholistan, roles of mother are under change. Now she is aware of decision making

and at some places gets chance to share her opinion which is still not necessarily given due attention. She has to look after education if there are school going children. It is a new role for her to perform which was not practised in past. Now in lesser Cholistan, when there is seasonal migration and male members of the family are away with herds of animals, mother has also to work in field for cutting fodder for the milking animals and hence supporting her family economically.

Forty years back, women after marriage and being at her in-laws were in most critical and vulnerable condition. She had to shoulder all responsibilities of the household irrespective of her age. In case of any difference of opinion with husband or father in law, she was being tortured physically and psychologically. It was perceived as a fair practice to correct her as they state: *Jahri boldi ay oh ee khaly khandi ay*” Those who speak in the presence of their husband are beaten.

Sometimes, they are also beaten by any in-law and if the husband stands with wife, he is considered as „honourless person“. Even today she has to tolerate many things; she is expected to show obedience to everyone in the family and contribute in domestic chores.

5.2.8.3 Role and Status of Daughter and Sister

A daughter in Cholistan is considered to be a symbol of obedience to the father, brothers and elderly of the family. She has to join her mother in carrying out all household and care of livestock responsibilities. Women of Cholistan proudly claim that our daughters do not interfere in any matter. A daughter is believed to be responsible of carrying and protecting pride and honour of their family. A daughter is respected and treated with kindness as she is considered from her birth as a „guest“. A daughter has to leave her parental home sooner or later for her husband family. Due to this belief, people avoid violence against daughters except in cases considered disgraceful and a cause of bad name to the family. She is still thought as a „responsibility“ which is to be shifted to others home.

At present still ideal daughter is the symbol of obedience but now some time she speaks in front of mother on ordinary matters. Regarding important decision-making, she is not given any right to speak or interfere. She is still considered as a responsibility which is to be shifted to others home. People of Cholistan avoid beating daughters. It is said: *“Oh wela na aye jey dhi marni py”* May that time never come, when we beat daughter.

Locally, this phrase has a deep meaning and point to the „act of honour“ where killing the girls take place in the name of honour. But when the family decides for killing of a woman as an act of honour, they have no mercy for her. That is why women wish that such time may never come. A girl as a sister has to keep in mind the pride and honour of her brothers during building relationships out of family. In the Cholistan, relationship of brother and sister is limited to silent and un-expressed respect where interaction is consciously avoided. They say; *“Dhyan bharawan di hya karyndyan hann”* Sisters kept distance with brothers because of shyness and respect.

So in Cholistan, sisters avoid seating equal to males especially with their brothers. If their brother will sit on the bedstead, they will sit on ground or on any relatively lower place as a symbol of displaying respect. Presently this trend is decreasing especially in lesser Cholistan but still sisters maintain difference from brothers. Only few times a sister talks to her brother (s) especially before her marriage. Furthermore, brothers are thought to be as protector and guardian of their sisters.

5.2.8.4 Role and Status of Brother

A brother before and after marriage, is thought to be the strength and support of each other. Elder brother automatically inherits a central position after father. In greater Cholistan, there is trend of dependency on brothers and relationship among brothers and sisters is very strong and ideal one. In the past, brothers mostly lived together and always prefer joint family system. Younger brothers gave regard and followed elder brothers just

like father, especially after death of father and elder brother had the role and responsibility like father. All family members respected him more by following his decisions after the father's death. Elder brother shouldered all the liabilities and did manage all the necessities of life for his brothers and sisters.

5.2.9 Change in Roles and Relations in the Family

Forty years earlier, social relationships were very strong and deep among people of Cholistan. Head of the family regulated the family life according to the local tradition of their *baradri*/clan. For maintaining and enhancing these social bonds, it was the responsibility of the head of the family to attend ceremonies like birth, marriage and death as representative of the family.

At present, some change regarding roles and relationships has been witnessed in some areas of Cholistan especially in lesser part but still family system is dominantly patriarchal. Its reason is that society expects prime role and responsibility from males. In the past, mostly decisions like fixation and arrangements of marriage were done by grandfather and it was father's duty to follow each and every decision of grandfather. At present in lesser Cholistan, father is becoming stronger and influential for acting as head of the family to meet the emerging needs of current time. Currently, many responsibilities of family head are shared by younger male for getting more acquainted with common practices and trends of current time because now people of Cholistan have more contact with outer world. Presently, there is emerging trend of consultation with wives for decision making especially in lesser Cholistan.

A woman as mother, whether she is in-charge of the family or a still living as a daughter-in-law, has the same status and is subject to a number of violent acts. With the passage of time, she is exposed to more violence than before. As result of more interaction

with the outer world, now women have change in thinking regarding tolerating violence without any resistance. Presently they make more arguments in their favour.

In lesser Cholistan, role and status of daughter and sister is changing in the wake of emerging trends. Similarly, some people are sending their daughters to schools for education and they are getting more awareness about their rights and duties. Gender disparity speaks volumes as still people of Cholistan do not accept interference of daughters in any important decision making. Although some males themselves have started to think about interests and benefits of daughters but deviance and rebellious attitude of daughters is not tolerable in Cholistan.

In greater Cholistan, decision making authorities are grandfather and father respectively but presently in lesser Cholistan, sometime, elder son has also contribution in decision making whereas there were rare cases when married women were consulted in some ordinary decisions. The opinion of women is considered only when it does not contradict with men's point of view. Head of the family, who is always a male, makes all the important decisions. Some elderly women have a say in family decision making but it is rare and only in few exceptional cases.

At present, husbands have started sharing important decisions with their wives and they have little more frankness with their sons and daughters than past. Role of mother is significant than past. That is why she is able to meet her basic household needs better than past. At present in lesser Cholistan, girls also make some demands like jewelry etc. for which mothers try to fulfil but still priority goes to needs and demands of son. With the passage of time, control of parents over children has not got weakened and they are influential.

The traditional respect among brothers has decreased especially in lesser Cholistan. Presently, this trend has undergone change. Local people themselves admit that nature and

depth of relations has been affected adversely over the passage of time. Now involvement of married sisters and brothers has declined in decision making at parental family.

At present, brothers want nuclear family system in lesser Cholistan after getting married. This is expressed locally as “*Hun bharawan wich pahly wala pyar kaeen nhi*” At present, level of love and respect among brothers has decreased. People report conflict wives behind this change. Interestingly in lesser Cholistan, where women’s opinion and involvement has increased in the decision making, there is decrease in love among brothers.

5.2.10 Role of Husband and Wife in Family and Change over the Time

Traditionally, relationship between husband and wife has many limitations in Cholistan. In the past, frankness of husband and wife was disliked by family members. In greater Cholistan even after becoming father and mother, married couple avoided talking freely in presence of grandfather and grandmother. That is why a young married couple was not expected to display such behaviour. Bride was expected to cover her face from her husband after marriage in presence of father/ mother-in-law. Young married couple had poor role in Cholistan until their children grow up. In the Cholistan, nature of relationship between husband and wife was determined by local customs and traditions. Husband and wife lived together in a same room (*ghopa*) till the birth of first child but after that they could no longer stay in same room. Male accompanied male and females joined other females in the house, this tradition is continue till date.

Presently, tough father and mother can do mutual communication in the presence of other family members in lesser Cholistan areas but still young couples are expected to display shame. On the other hand, this trend is also emerging in greater Cholistan but frankness and open communication between newly married couple is disliked. This increasing mutual understanding is leading towards adoption of nuclear family system in lesser part. In greater Cholistan, still the tradition of separating male and female after birth

of first child is practiced. A man who follows his wife's opinion is subject to criticism and people make fun of him. That is why even if male follow their wives, they tried to conceal that to avoid criticism and fun.

5.3 Part-III; Women and Religion as Social Institution in Cholitan

Religion is one of the oldest human institutions²⁵¹ and includes any institutionalized system of beliefs and practices that symbolizes a relationship between the sacred and the mundane²⁵². Religion is a social institution that generates connections between people and provides basis for a sense of community and social integration. Besides this, religion provides answers of sacred questions such as about life, death, faith and calamities²⁵³.

Religion plays many important functions in the society for its smooth functioning. Major role of religion in a society is to unite people through shared symbolism, values, and norms. Religious thoughts and rituals establish rules of fair play, making social life orderly. Every society uses religious ideas to promote conformity. Religious beliefs offer the comforting sense that our life serves some greater purpose²⁵⁴. Similarly, religion provides motivation and movement for social change in the society. Religious organizations have also been agents of social and political changes²⁵⁵.

5.3.1 Religion as Social Institution in Cholistan

In the desert of Cholistan, religion has a pervasive role based on the implementation of the values of Islam²⁵⁶. Cholistan area was introduced with Islam as early as 712 A.D. when the Muslim armies conquered this area under leadership of Arab commander

²⁵¹. Anthony Giddens, Mitchell Duneier, and Richard P Applebaum, *Essentials of Sociology*(WW Norton & Co Inc, 2007).321.

²⁵². Kerry Ferris and Jill Stein, *The Real World: An Introduction to Sociology*(WW Norton, 2008).365.

²⁵³. Ron Matson, *The Spirit of Sociology*(Pearson Education, 2005).365.

²⁵⁴. John J. Macionis, *Sociology*(Delhi: Dorling Kindersley, 2006).491.

²⁵⁵. Ibid.308.

²⁵⁶. Baqai, *Social Order in Pakistani Society*. 301.

Muhammad Bin Qasim after defeating Raja Dahir²⁵⁷. In practice, the people should have been more religious like other deserts in the Middle East and Africa but an outsider can easily observe their low inclinations and enthusiasm towards religion as compared to other parts of the country. This is due to many reasons like re-enforcing the religious practices through formal education, formal religious education through religious seminaries, climatic conditions, isolation of the area from the rest of the country, lack of communication and transportation and the general awareness about Islam. They have very poor understanding of the religious belief and practices, particularly in greater Cholistan. Scope of social change is not limited to any specific aspect of life, therefore religion is also no exception. Similarly, concept of religion is under change in the Cholistan, although its pace is slow and will take much time with the development of the communication and education in the area. Lesser Cholistan is near to settled villages and towns where comparatively there is more education and awareness about religion, that is why here religious awareness is found to the maximum. As a result of this proximity, people of lesser Cholistan get opportunity of interaction with people from outside the desert. In Cholistan, there are two major religions namely Islam and Hinduism. Muslims are a vast majority whereas Hindus are in minority.

5.3.2 Religious Knowledge and Practices

In Pakistan's context, the preachers, locally called *Tableghee* (preachers of Islam) people go everywhere to disseminate the religious knowledge and practices and advise to establish the practice of prayers at least but Cholistan, especially the greater Cholistan even do not enjoy this opportunity due to climatic and geographical conditions. Among the Muslims, it is generally believed that the older people are more meticulous in religious practices as compared to the young one but in case of Cholistan the case is different. Older people still are ill-aware of the religious knowledge and practices.

²⁵⁷Din, Malik Muhammad. *Bahawalpur State with Map 1904*. (Islamabad: Sang-e-Meel Publication, 2001)

The main reason of this deficiency of religious knowledge is Cholistan's specific geographic conditions. The greater Cholistan spreads over an area of 18852 Sq.Kms having no specific religious institution²⁵⁸. No *Madrassa* or religious seminaries are found giving religious education and lack of any sort of formal educational institutions and other sources of knowledge and awareness and communication etc. Religious knowledge is limited to only few rituals. If we go back some forty years, their knowledge about religion was limited to too few people about saying prayers occasionally, observing fasting in the month of Ramadan only by a few, not everybody. It was revealed by the respondents that their forefathers even did not know about fasting, one of the important pillars of Islam. For them, visiting shrines and following *pier* (religious mentor) was the most important religious activity.

Over all, literacy rate in Pakistan is poor, but in Cholistan situation is worst even after existing of some schools in the area. Forty years back, it was impossible to find any religiously educated persons in the Cholistan area. Contrarily, in other parts of Pakistan, there are so many religious institutions which can be found at the level of every village or town. But in case of Cholistan, various factors like lack of basic amenities of life, remoteness of the area, poor transportation facilities and severe weather conditions are the major reasons that abstained the outsiders to stay in Cholistan for leading prayers and imparting religious education even now. In Cholistan, just to born as a Muslim or Hindu is considered enough and least importance is given to impart religious education now.

The case of lesser Cholistan is a bit different. As the area is closer to the urban and settled areas, people has little interaction with the people from outside the area and thus acquired some knowledge about religious practices or at least heard and observed themselves during their trip to the urban and suburban areas. Still there was no

²⁵⁸ Cholistan Development Authority, office record (2013)

understanding that how to perform it practically. Only very few people were able to perform religious practices such as prayer and recitation of Holy Quran. In the past, even they were not aware about the basic religious practices and rituals mandatory at the time of birth and death. Local people admit it and express by saying; “*Abadi dy lokan di dekha dakhi Karendy hann*” We do practice religion by observing people of settled/urban areas.

Some people even did not know the basic declaration to become a Muslim, the *kalmia-tayyeba* or the holy pledge. Some forty years back, people of Cholistan were so ignorant of the religion that they used to bury the dead without funeral prayers because of their unawareness of the religious rituals.

In Cholistan, forty years back every man, woman and child worn amulet for one or the other problem being faced or to encounter any fourth coming one. Even children were wearing large number of amulet from 2 to 8 or some times more because they were considered more vulnerable. Regarding any possible predicted disease or possession by *jinn* (devil), they were given amulet for wearing around the neck or tied upon their arm. Women are more superstitious as they feel more helpless due to their relatively low status in that society and their insecurities.

Though, performing *hajj* (pilgrimage) to Makkah is the last pillar and only those Muslims are supposed to perform it who can afford it financially but in Cholistan, it has been the most popular among the other four pillars of the religion. In Cholistan, it brings popularity and enhances social status; the person who goes to perform *hajj* is called a *haji sahib* and receives more honor and public trust. That’s why even at a time when majority of the people were not even aware of offering prayer, there was trend and desire for performing *hajj* which required more efforts and resources. So they kept saving money for many years for this purpose.

This was the level of understanding of religion by men. While, the women were even far behind in this regard and many elderly women, even today cannot utter a few words of the obligatory prayers. Religion in Cholistan is symbolic but practical, so it is limited to few beliefs and practices like using amulet and giving gifts to religious mentor is the established norm and considered that it will save them from bad happenings in the present life as well as in the world hereafter.

5.3.3 Sacred Places and Religious Celebrations

Religion revolves around sacred places and persons in Cholistan. The sacred envisage almost everything thought to be as supernatural which creates a deep and sentiments of fear, respect, mystery, and humbleness²⁵⁹. Among the Muslims the *Baitullah* or Holy *Kaaba* at Makkah, The Mosque and tomb of the holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) at Madina, *Baitul Muqaddas* or the Dome of Rock in Jerusalem, Israel, any mosques anywhere, the holy shrines, etc. are considered as sacred places and In-charge of a shrine, mostly descendent of that holy person are considered to be the sacred religious personalities.

From history, people of Cholistan satisfy religious sentiments by visiting the shrine of *Chanan peer* and tying up clothes with trees on or within the vicinity of the shrine. Locally, these trees are also called as *Thagar peer*. People vow for their needs and upon fulfillment, they return with certain gifts like animals like cows and goats in the shape of *Nazrana*.

Like celebration of the carnival of *Chanan Peer* and the other saints, the people of Cholistan also celebrate the two *Eids* namely the *Eid-ul- Azha* and *Eid-ul-Fitr* but with a little bit dissimilarity than the settled areas. The big variation has been level of religious education of the Cholistani people who did not perform obligatory prayers. In addition,

²⁵⁹. Joan Ferrante, *Sociology* (Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth, 2006).524.

people in Cholistan are poor and there cannot afford new clothes for themselves and the children, mostly using the old one but washed and cleaned. The greater Cholistan is a typical example.

Forty years back, the trend of slaughtering the sacrificial animals on *Eid ulAzha* was observed and is being done till date. This custom also suited them due to their occupation and availability of abundance of animals. Offering of the Eids prayers were not served as nobody did not know how to pray the prayers nor there was any person available in the Cholistan to lead the prayers.

5.3.4 Superstitions

It is widely known that all societies disseminate certain beliefs and superstitions in minds of its members due to lack of true religious knowledge. Despite scientific and technological advancement, it is undeniable fact that still irrationality and superstition is prevailing in even most advanced parts of world²⁶⁰. In case of greater Cholistan, not to talk about science and modern inventions, concept of formal and general education is non-existent. So there exist many myths. Natural happenings and signs are given different meanings; some as lucky sign and other as baleful.

In Cholistan, people believe in superstitions because they are more in contact and dependent on nature and knew human helplessness in front of natural forces. They also lacked resources to encounter even their basic problems like health and economic ones. Lack of facilities and resources for the solution of problem led them to be dependent upon superstitions. If a person is sad or happy, all things and happenings are attributed to evil eyes and bad effect of supernatural powers and enemies. Some major signs of their superstitions are as below;

²⁶⁰. <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Jun/3/why-are-we-so-superstitious--69.asp>

If some went out of home on a journey, that day they did not clean the house as they think the person will not return safely as a result of doing so. Beliefs and consultation with *peer*, religious mentor is considered as the most important and think he will find a solution for their problem. Visiting *peers* for help is a routine matter for people in Cholistan is particular. The *peers* mostly advise them to use the amulets that they give to the people suffering from any problem. They advise them to dissolve some amulets in honey or sugar syrup or in water, tie up the amulet in coloured threads and use them around the neck or tie on the arms. This practice is common among both Hindus and Muslims of lesser as well as greater Cholistan.

From centuries, Cholistani people use amulets for the relief from many health, family, personal, as well as economic problems. As for centuries, there have been no health facilities in Cholistan either in public or private sector (including herbal doctors or locally known as *hakeems*), people depended on locally available sources for getting relief from sufferings and sorrows through amulets. Ignorance and illiteracy speaks volumes as local people also do take amulet to avoid any disease or problem in future.

5.3.5 Religious Personalities

In the Indo-Pak subcontinent, Islam as religion has largely been spread by the saints who have mostly been the descendants of the Holy prophet Muhammad (PBUH), migrated from Arabia or came here from different parts of the sub-continent. Mostly *peers* do not have origin from the desert *Rohi*. Their main aim was to spread the religion of Islam through their good deeds and practices. Therefore, since centuries, they hold high social prestige and status. At present, most of the *peers* are descendants of those who came to the area hundreds of years ago. Mostly, they may not as truly spiritual as their forefathers were but they still hold an ascribed status and they are respected and believed in. At present, a *peer* has more respect and honour than *Imam* (a person leading the prayers), a person who

teach them religion as the latter is a new concept than a *peer*. A *peer* is considered to be closer to *Allah* (God) and it is believed that they can solve their problems due to closeness to God than an *Imam*.

The role of *peer* is not merely limited to only religious matters but it extends to whole of social and political lives of their devotees. This trend has direct relationship with literacy and awareness, so in those areas where there is illiteracy, religious mentors are more influential and powerful. This situation is more pathetic in case of Cholistan. Due to lack of mass illiteracy, ignorance and low interaction with outer world, Cholistani people blindly follow and worship their *peers*. As they are unable to seek any other solution of the troubles and turmoil they met in their social life, therefore, they consider their religious mentors as „saviours“ and contact them in the time of difficulty ranging from snake bite to fatal diseases, economic and family problems, marriages (when there is possibility of rejection of proposal for marriage) etc. People have unshakeable trust in them and do not hesitate to share secrets of personal and family life. They say as: “*Peer kolon keh da parda*”. Nothing is hidden from *peer*.

People of Cholistan have deep regards for religious personalities which is evident from their firm beliefs in two spiritual personalities of the area known as *Chanan Peer* and *Khawaja Ghulam Fareed*. There is immense respect and regard for both personalities, more than religion. Local people prefer to memorize poetry of Khawaja Ghulam Fareed more than memorizing the holy Quran or prayers. They sing his poetry on social occasions such as anniversaries etc. The singing of sanity poetry has been a men activity because it is thought to be an intellectual activity and women were not considered suitable for it. In other parts of Pakistan like Khyber PakthunKhwa and Baluchistan, the hold of such *peers* is found to be the minimum because the hold of religion is stronger and people are more aware

of the religion. In the provinces of Sind and Punjab, the superstitiousness and belief in *peers* is found to the maximum and Cholistan is surrounded by these two provinces.

5.3.6 Women and Religious Practices

It is a matter of common observation that some religions place more obligations upon men than women in the performance of their religious practices and vice-versa. Recent studies in United Kingdom in particular, suggest that Muslim and Jew men are more religious than women while Hindu and Christian women have been found more religious than men²⁶¹. Religiosity of men or women is religion specific. Among the Muslims and Jews, it is due to the traditional allocation of primary home making and child care responsibilities of women. In both the religions, women are not required to pray in congregation and those women who are occupied with domestic chores, are less obligated to pray or engage in religious activities. Among Hindus and Christians, women seem to be more religious than men as more Christian women attend the bible lessons and churches than men.

In Cholistan, Hindus and Muslims have been living together since centuries. Among the Muslim, role of women is limited to follow male members of the family either father, brother, husband or son. Her knowledge on religion is dependent on men, reason being their non-participation in religious congregations and are less exposed to religious activities. Forty years back, putting a glance over following of religion of the both men and women reveals that number of women following religious obligation was less than half of the men.

5.3.7 Religion and Change in Role of Women

In the greater Cholistan, there are no state run institutions like hospitals, school, colleges and mosques, except a few developmental schemes by CDA. There is no *madrasa*

²⁶¹Kate Miriam Loewenthal, Andrew K MacLeod, and Marco Cinnirella, "Are Women More Religious Than Men? Gender Differences in Religious Activity among Different Religious Groups in the UK," *Personality and Individual Differences* 32, no. 1 (2002).133-139.

seminary for imparting religious education to the youth because there are no regular prayers in mosques where elder as well as children can get to gather and learn. Moreover, in Cholistan's culture, a father has less interaction with children that is why they cannot spare time to teach their children or helping them to take to the nearby place where such opportunities are available. The researcher found a few women, who can recite the holy Quran or were familiar about offering the prayers; have assumed this responsibility to help the children in learning the holy Quran and prayers. A mother's lap is said to be the first institution, keeping align with saying, women in Cholistan have been shouldering this responsibility from centuries. Forty years back, too few women could recite the holy Quran or knew prayers. In case, there were no women in the family to train the children about mandatory religious obligation, other women in the neighbourhood or nearby *tobas* were contacted to extend help. If she agreed, the children were sent to her. The situation is reflective of the level of religious knowledge in the greater Cholistan areas forty years back. Still, the situation is same and the concept of religion is limited to recitation of the holy Quran and performance of mandatory prayers.

Recently, the CDA has established Masjid Schools (Mosque schools) in the Cholistan area; therefore mothers are now conscious about religious education of their children. Presently job of women also includes motivation of children for attending school or any person who could teach basics of religion.

Life of a woman in Cholistan revolves around mobility from place to place for performing domestic chores. Such as fetching drinking water for family members and animals from *toba*, collecting fuel for cooking kept them much busy in activities that make them less involved in religious activities. Existing gap of true religious concepts and the existing local practices is filled by the *peers* by involving people in superstitions.

As a result of sedentarization in lesser Cholistan there is emergence of social and economic development. This has changed the roles of women regarding imparting religious education to the next generation. At some place, prayers leader/religious teacher have taken the responsibility of giving religious education to the children. Still mothers and elderly women of the family have to assume the responsibility of teaching religion to the children which in many cases is not religion but a mix of superstitions as women themselves know little about religion. The increased pressure of the religious institution in the lesser part of Cholistan and the subsequent awareness about the religious education has enhanced the roles of the women.

5.3.8 Changing Attitude towards *Peers*

The establishment of mosque schools, arrival of prayer leaders, and school teachers from the settled areas, improved transportation to and from the settled areas and the frequent interaction of Cholistan people with the people outside the desert has induced many changes. Social awareness has played its role in making people think critically and independently. As a result of this exposure to the outer world, *peer* is no more all in all for the solution of problems as he was considered un-challengeable and next to God in the earlier times. Now are alternate sources of knowledge available to them such as prayer leaders, religious gatherings in the settled areas and educated members in the family.

The *peers* accept costly gifts from the illiterate and ignorant but this trend is on decline. The magic of *peers* is dwindling and researcher heard people saying; “*Jadon lor hoi pherra pa ya*” When *peers* need anything, they come to devotees. Still they cannot go against *peer* due to centuries old traditions. Furthermore, the trend of amulets has decreased but not totally vanished. Previously, every man had an amulet in his neck irrespective of age, but now many males in lesser Cholistan can be seen without amulet around their neck or arm, also observed by the researcher herself, a visible change in their religious beliefs.

5.3.9 Change in Religions Awareness

Forty years ago, many people were not even aware about the name of their religious practices, only few of them knew how to perform the basic ritual and even fewer knew how to offer prayer. People of greater Cholistan were not even aware about fasting or the fasting month *Ramdhan*. There was hardly any person available in Cholistan who could offer prayer in right way or observe fasting. Few people who were practicing religious activities belonged to lesser Cholistan.

Today, there is remarkable change in the public outlook towards religion in the Cholistan. Religion is an emerging phenomenon and is no more limited to just born in either

a Muslim or Hindu family. Many people, particularly the young ones are aware about religious practices like recitation of holy Quran, offering prayers and fasting in the month of *Ramdhan*.

Lesser Cholistan is becoming semi-nomadic area as people reside at the same place for most of time of the year. They do migrate partly; some members of the family take the herds into greater Cholistan and rest of the family members stay at their permanent abode. This change has also influenced their understanding of religion. Now, with increase in education and awareness to some extent, they know not only the rituals but even few people are also aware about difference in practice by different religious sects.

Performance of religious practices is dependent upon life style. Like offering prayers demands for purity of clothes and body and ablution which in Cholistan was difficult though not impossible because of poor availability of water. Forty years back, the only source of income was raising animal and the herds of animals were driven for grazing, so most of the time, men kept moving with the animals and remained out of home. That is why there was no practice of offering prayers in congregation although small mosques or remnants of mosques were available since centuries.

5.3.10 Changing Attitude towards Religion

Presently in lesser Cholistan, comparatively better earning and educational opportunities are available, though rudimentary in nature, but have accelerated the pace of change. Transportation sources have changed from camel riding to automobiles; similarly TV channels in the lesser Cholistan are leading to more social contacts with the urban communities. Participation in social gathering has become easy leading to dissemination of religious knowledge and education resulting in better understanding about religion.

As a result of this change, now many people are aware of basic religious obligation in the lesser Cholistan. Some people have become practical Muslims like offering prayer,

fasting, going to mosque for congregation, learning Quran and *Ahadith* (the sayings of the holy prophet PBUH). This trend is visible in lesser Cholistan. Presently, throughout the Cholistan, at many *tobas*, there is a mosque and a total of 378²⁶² mosques have been established in Cholistan which is a clear sign of a change towards religion and civic life.

5.3.11 Change in Mode of Religious Celebrations

Social Change has influenced the mode and ways of religious celebrations in Cholistan. At present, *Eid-ul-Fiter* is more popular than past, similarly some people also observe fasting especially in lesser Cholistan. Those who can afford, get new clothes and shoes for their children on the eve of *Eid* particularly in the lesser part. The trend of celebrating *Eid-ul-Azha* is still there and sacrificial animals are slaughtered but it seems that number of animals slaughtered during the festival has decreased. The reason is decrease in number of animal in lesser Cholistan as now herd size is decreasing. In both parts of Cholistan, now people offer *Eid* prayers. Tradition of participation in annual *Mela* (carnivals) is still present. A carnival is held at shrine of *Chanan peer* which is a very sacred place for the locals. Now mostly people come here for entertainment rather than offering vows.

Superstitions are dying away in the Cholistan. Education and awareness has colored every aspect of human life in Cholistan. It has brought change in the mind set of local people. Increasing awareness through formal education has also brought change in understanding the reality of many supernatural happenings. In lesser Cholistan, now belief in superstitions is dying. Although, its pace is slow because of centuries old existence but the change is happening. Now in case of illness or health problems, few people visit the doctors and physicians instead of going to *peers*.

²⁶²Cholistan Development Authority, office record (2013)

6. Chapter-VI: Women and Health, Education and Economic Institutions in Cholistan

This chapter consists of three sections. The first section discusses the health institution in Cholistan and the role of women in health services. In second section, the study gives a detailed note on the institution of education. While, the third section contains findings on the economic institution in Cholistan, particularly focusing on the role of women.

6.1 Part-I: Women and Health Institution in Cholistan

Overall, the chapter contains different facets of health in Cholistan such as methods of treatment, change in practices for treatment of disease, health problems and roles of women in health care. Besides, it also discusses the change in women's role over the passage of time in the health care.

6.1.1 Health in Nomadic Societies

Nomads live at the isolated places and remote areas where permanent and quality health services are obsolete. Due to poor accessibility to nomadic areas, very limited data on their health problems and measures taken for its prevention are available. Due to their mobile life style, formal data on the health status of the nomads even do not exist; therefore, small scale informal information is available which do not present broader and clear picture of the situation²⁶³. There are many barriers in the provision of health facilities to nomads such as poor socio-economic conditions, ignorance about hygiene and traditional life style. Poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition and lack of awareness about health facilities, lack of hospital facilities in the surroundings has contributed towards poor health status of the

²⁶³Pascal James Imperato, "Problems in Providing Health Services to Desert Nomads in West Africa," *Tropical doctor* 5, no. 3 (1975).

nomads²⁶⁴. In the nomadic societies, there is no access to the health facilities. All the health clinics are available to the settled population and nomads are deprived of it. Many of the diseases found in the nomads are due to their environmental conditions. Settled people consider the pastoralists inferiors due to their illiteracy and conventional life style. But, nomads have all the necessary skills needed for survival in the harsh circumstances²⁶⁵.

Besides their remoteness, some other factors create hindrance in the provision of health facilities to the nomads. Constant mobility of the nomads and geographic remoteness, linguistic and political barriers keeps them out of access from health services²⁶⁶.

6.1.2 Health Awareness in Cholistan

Health has been defined as: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"²⁶⁷. As mentioned earlier, Cholistan being desert area has severe temperature, massively spread sand dunes and is situated at long distance from the urban power centres. therefore, health facilities are either not available or out of reach for Cholistanis, that is why, people depend on centuries old informal strategies and remedies prepared with the local shrubs. Cholistanis have strong belief that diseases and death are divine happenings and human beings are helpless against them. Forty years ago, there was poor awareness about health and hygiene on the part of people living in Cholistan. Lack of education coupled with poor access to other channels of dissemination of awareness such as media, lack of institutional services for health and hygiene promotion, nature of life style (grazing the herds), unavailability of safe drinking

²⁶⁴ Sachdev, "Perspectives on Health, Health Needs and Health Care Services among Select Nomad Tribal Populations of Rajasthan, India."p.2

²⁶⁵ Abdikarim Sheik-Mohamed and J P Velema, "Health Care for Nomads in Sub-Saharan Africans," *Tropical medicine & international health* 4, no. 10 (1999), 695-707.

²⁶⁶ Haraldson, "Reflections on Nomadic and Scattered Populations."1.

²⁶⁷ World Health Organization, "International Health Conference " (New York, USA, June, 19-22 1946). 100.

water, electricity and sanitation arrangements were indication of poor health status of people in Cholistan.

In Cholistan, the most important source of health awareness is interaction of Cholistanis with the people of settled areas. Now, there is little know-how about formal methods of treatment of patient. At present, in case of emergency, subject to the affordability and availability of conveyance facility, patient is taken to the nearby health care centre in the settled areas for treatment reason being the health care centres in the Cholistan area. Nomads of the dry and thirsty Cholistan are deprived of the fruits of the development and generally, give a look of the stone-age. Apart from drinking water, they do not have access to other basic facilities of life such as health and education²⁶⁸. Lack of health facilities coupled with unavailability of conveyance facilities have led the local people to relate the diseases with the willingness of God. These words clearly indicate helplessness of the people about health problems: "*Rohi which ALLAH daa ee elaj ay*" Only ALLAH cures diseases in the desert.

In the greater Cholistan, taking bath and changing clothes is not usual. This practice is due to scarcity of water and oblivion about its benefits for keeping oneself healthy. Here taking bath and changing clothes is only need based. It is a strong belief in Cholistan that awareness about health problems and hygienic conditions have nothing to do with maintaining good health instead it is a matter of pure food. It is also believed that increasing diseases are due to poor diet taken by people presently; now butter and milk is not as much part of daily food as it was in the past. That is why, selling milk and butter is generally disliked in Cholistan. Commonly, milk is taken by family members for staying healthy.

²⁶⁸ Ahmad, Ali, and Farooq, "Historical and Archaeological Perspectives of Soil Degradation in Cholistan."6.

There is massive unawareness about health and related problems in the Cholistan. The researcher found that people are not aware about names and nature of even common diseases such as heart attack, diabetes, tuberculosis, cholera and malaria etc. They just knew about fever and pain. Whenever someone feels un-well, they just call it either fever or pain in any part of the body. Some diseases are desert and poor specific such as tuberculosis, trachoma, guinea worm disease²⁶⁹.

6.1.3 Methods for Treatment of Health problems in Cholistan

Forty years ago, there were different measures taken for addressing health problems. One of the methods was ethno-medicines which encompassed both herbal and the spiritual treatment. In the nomadic societies, old fashioned healers do treatment for both human and livestock²⁷⁰.

In case of any health problem, Cholistani people used various local herbs as a first hand available relief from the health problems. Knowledge about the utility of different herbs and home based remedies is based on experience of centuries which keeps on shifting from one generation to another one. For example, hot milk is given for relief of headache ignoring the immediate cause(s) of disease. Second traditional method for addressing any health problem is the usage of amulet. Both of these practices continue till date in both parts of Cholistan. With the passage of time, frequency of interaction of Cholistanis with the people of settled areas has increased resultantly there is some awareness about modern methods of treatment. That is why, there has emerged the concept of self-medication especially in greater Cholistan where there are no medical doctors and trained medical personnel. People depend on common over-the-counter type medicines which are available everywhere at groceries shops for relief from common diseases. These brand name

²⁶⁹ Sheik-Mohamed and Velema, "Where Health Care Has No Access: The Nomadic Populations of Sub-Saharan Africa."10.

²⁷⁰ Schelling et al., "Towards Integrated and Adapted Health Services for Nomadic Pastoralists and Their Animals: A North-South Partnership."278.

medicines are purchased and kept at home for future use. Local people also ask for medicines from outsiders; they take all type of medicines from strangers without realizing the side effects of them.

6.1.4 Ethno Medication

Forty years earlier, majority of the people in the greater Cholistan depend on ethno-medicines for curing diseases. One reason for common use of ethno-medicines was that local people had a firm belief that there are no side effects of this method. In their words: “*Jey desi elaj naal aram na away tan koi noqsan vee kaen nhi theenda*”. If there is no relief from herbal treatment, atleast there will be no harm.

Irrespective of the fact that it is scientifically proven that certain herbs have adverse effects on human health. People of Cholistan have always used medicinal plants for the treatment of common diseases. From history, Indigenous knowledge of the Cholistani people about the benefits of medicinal effects of plants is part of culture. They have enough knowledge about utilization of medicinal plants but it is going to be lost due to interference of modern cultural changes²⁷¹.

Certain plants such as *Calotropis gigantean*, *Capparis decidua* and *Cleome scaposa*²⁷² with the medicinal characteristics grow seasonally, so people stored them at home. When there is a health problem, they boil the leaves, stem or roots of the shrub and give the syrup to the patient. Some of the shrubs are dried and grinded for making it in powder form. Whereas some shrubs are found throughout the year, so they are searched and found at the time of need. In many cases, when there is no known shrub for relief of any health problem in greater Cholistan, people do the treatment through hit and trial method;

²⁷¹ Fayyaz Ahmad, *The Studies on Medicinal Plants of Cholistan Desert Pakistan* (Germany: Lap Lambert: Academic Publishing, 2013).

²⁷² Hameed et al., "Medicinal Flora of the Cholistan Desert: A Review."43.

from fever to snake biting, they try to relieve the pain of the patients through use of local herbs about which they know little about effects.

In case of greater Cholistan, at present, there is little acquaintance with modern treatment methods that is why self-medication is replacing ethno-medication. People In the greater Cholistan are more aware about utility of different herbs than lesser Cholistan because now here, they are less dependent on herbs for treatment. Forty years back, in case of lesser Cholistan, there were many people who had knowledge about utility of herbs because at that time they were also dependent on this method of treatment. Till date, ethno-medicine is a source of treatment of Cholistan.

6.1.5 Amulet and Holy Reading

There is massive illiteracy and unawareness in Cholistan and people have strong belief in superstitions in all walks of life. As a result of superstitiousness, amulet is massively used and thought to be panacea for relief from each and every problem including health. It is so popular practice that when someone visits an ill person, first question they ask is about the wearing of amulet. Family members of the patient show amulet as an expression of proper care being taken.

Snake biting is very common in Cholistan. In such case, patient needs immediate and special medical treatment, but Cholistani people prefer to go to *peer* for holy reading instead of going to the doctor. In lesser Cholistan, after increased level of social awareness, although there is increasing trend of accessing health centres, but yet majority of people are superstitious about health related problems. To date, superstitions are so deep rooted that in case of any health problem, first of all a *peer* is contacted and his advice is strictly followed instead of visiting physician. A *peer* always gives an amulet and water after holy reading.

Childless married couples and their families believe that childlessness is not a medical problem rather it is result of magical effects from an enemy. Therefore, they go to

peer for taking amulet and visit shrine as treatment of infertility. Similarly, couples having only daughters and wishing for son, also go to *peer* for taking amulet, about which they believe that this would give them a son.

6.1.6 Self-Medication

As a result of interaction with people from settled villages and towns, there is little awareness about allopathic method on the part of people in Cholistan. Grand generations were not aware about any other method of treatment except ethno medication and holy reading i.e. the herbal as well as spiritual methods of healing. Availability of conveyance facility for taking patients to settled towns and cities as well as occasional visits of health personnel to Cholistan have made the local people aware about allopathic medicines. On the one hand, there are no health facilities in greater Cholistan. Moreover, poor economic and geographic conditions do not allow people to visit doctors in settled areas. In such hostile conditions, local people have to depend on self-medication. If a patient is taken to the doctor and he gives a specific medicine to one patient with certain symptoms, Cholistanis buy the same medicines from medical stores for the other patient with same or similar symptoms. Sometime, local people do not bother about the abuse of medicines; they demand for tablets from visitors, they ask in these words: “*Koi golih ay ty dewo cha, jehri vee ay, tapp ay*” If you have any tablet, give us for a person suffering from fever.

It is because of their poor understanding and knowledge about allopathic medicines, they think that all the medicine are same and can be used to for any health problem. It is common practice in Cholistan that a person, who visits nearby settlement for purchasing common household items, also brings common medicines for fever, flu, cough and pain. These medicines are used by them whenever they feel its needs.

6.1.7 Changing Trends of Treatment in Cholistan

Over last forty year, treatment method went under certain changes especially in case of lesser Cholistan where there is more social and economic change as compared to greater Cholistan. At present, economic and social change has changed the mind set of people living in lesser Cholistan for treatment of patients. Relatively they have easy access to the settled areas, similarly availability of cell phone has also facilitated for accessing better health facilities. Now their interaction with people from outside the area has become frequent due to economic and working relationship coupled with education. In addition, availability of some public health institutions has made people aware about taking little care of their health. The researcher is of the opinion that the social change in Cholistan is induced because of the provision of educational and health services as well as roads and other sources of communication. These services have initiated and accelerated the pace of social change in Cholistan during last 40 years. Though the availability of these services is not parallel to those in the urban areas of Pakistan, but still these factors are pushing for social change in the lesser part of Cholistan.

In Cholistan area, mobility from one place to another is difficult and specifically in greater Cholistan, movement is dependent on camels and on foot, whereas health facilities are located at a long distance from villages/*tobas* which also contribute to the health agonies of Cholistani people. If the health facilities were available nearer to the settlement, health conditions might have been different.

The Pakistani health delivery system consists of three tiers namely the primary health delivery system, the secondary health delivery system and the tertiary health delivery system, in the greater part of Cholistan there are no health facilities of any level at all²⁷³. In Cholistan nomads live below the poverty line and without basic human needs such as clean

²⁷³ Cholistan Development Authority, (2012) Health Facilities in Cholistan (Dated: 15-12-2012) community development wing, file no.5.

drinking water, sufficient food, health and educational facilities for children²⁷⁴. Lack of health facilities has conditioned the people to fatalism. This contentment on the one hand is source of their satisfaction and on the other, it is the reason for not availing facilities outside the desert.

Cholistan being bordering with India is under the control of Pakistan army (Desert Rangers), where they have stations in different location of the desert area. Sometimes, during patrolling, the Ranger personnel carry the emergency patients to the nearby hospital on the request of the family. Rarely, they also hold free medical camps to help the locals.

In the lesser Cholistan, CDA has established few health centres but lack of staff, medicine, necessary medical equipment and poor physical structure is evident of poor status of health facilities. In case of greater Cholistan, severe summer, lack of transportation facilities, poor monitoring of the health personnel who mostly remain absent, have worsened the situation. These health centres only deal patients with minor health problems such as flu, fever and cough are attended by the non-medical staff and in case of serious health problem, patients are taken to functional hospitals in urban Bahawalpur for treatment.

The boundaries of Cholistan are adjaacent to three districts of Punjab. Every district has its health care units in its territorial jurisdiction. Here is detail of health centres established by all districts.

Table 1. Health Facilities in Cholistan

Name of the District	R.H.Cs.	B.H.U.s.	Dispensaries	Status
Bahawalpur	1	04	01	Non-functional
Bahawalnagar	0	01	01	Both unctional
Rahim Yar Khan	0	04	0	All Functional

Source: Cholistan Development Authority (2014)

²⁷⁴ Akhter and Arshad, "Arid Rangelands in the Cholistan Desert (Pakistan)", 2013. p.3.

These centres are meant to serve a population of 1, 55,000. CDA authorities reported that only half of the health centres are functional. A Basic Health Unit (BHU) serves a catchment area of a union council or up to 20,000 individuals, a Rural Health Centre (RHC) is established to serve a population of up to 100,000 whereas dispensary is for one or more than one villages for minor health problems like minor injuries, flu and cold etc.

6.1.8 Women's Health Problems and their Role in Health Care

Pakistan has the lowest possible health indicators in the south-west Asia. Maternal mortality rate, newly born, infant and under five mortality, polio mellitus, and many other types of women's sufferings²⁷⁵ are rampant. Cholistan is a far flung desert, poor and forgotten area where these problem are found to the maximum. 100% deliveries take place at homes, attended by untrained attendants like mother-in-law or elderly women of the *toba*. Women in Cholistan perform role of a caretaker for patients and sometimes she herself has to prepare herbal medicines for treatment especially when ailing person is a woman.

Forty years back in both part of Cholistan, medical and general care during pregnancy and delivery was not considered necessary. It was perception that pregnancy and child birth were normal process. But presently, in case of lesser Cholistan, little importance is given to expecting women and change in handling pregnancy is visible. Now midwife is called upon and doctor is also consulted in some serious cases.

Cultural strictness is another cause of women suffering in Cholistan. It is not possible for a woman to go to a male doctor in case of ailment, in some cases even a woman cannot go to lady doctor in the urban area without being escorted by husband/ father or brother. A woman is not supposed to be touched by a male doctor while having a medical check-up.

²⁷⁵Ibid.

Poverty is the main problem where many children die of hunger and famine like situation. Women remain under nourished, producing underweight children which are vulnerable for a many diseases. The nomadic life style also contributes to their health problems. Pastoralist women are more marginalized economically and socially than men as they have limited role in decision making²⁷⁶. Due to dependence on men and having secondary social status, women have to face many cultural restrictions in the nomadic society for treatment of health problems. Here, women have to perform many indoor and outdoor tasks without awareness about their health problems.

Women's role in the treatment of females is significant in the whole of Cholistan. It is only the women who have to shoulder the health problems of fellow women. Elderly women have solution of nearly all problems because they have faced all such situations during their young age. They have some immediate remedies like taking hot milk or apply any herbs in case of pain. There is no scientific evidence about effectiveness of such treatment but it is only immediate measure taken for relief.

In lesser Cholistan, with the availability of the health facilities such as RHC and BHU, where Lady Health Visitors (LHV) and Lady Health Workers (LHW) are also employed, women are familiar with aim as and objectives of these health personnel, resultantly in case of emergency subject to financial affordability, they avail these health facilities. Now a mid-wife or LHV is called to help in delivery cases. Monthly visit of LHV has also played important role in raising health related awareness on the part of women. Utilization of all facilities is largely dependent on men's willingness for receiving formal health care. Currently, during pregnancy family members pay little care to the expectant women in lesser Cholistan.

²⁷⁶ Antonio Rota, "Women and Pastoralism."

In the Cholistan, trend for large family size has also added to the health problem of the women. In lesser Cholistan, women have some awareness about family planning methods but they cannot practice because of their poor say in decision making about family size. Therefore, having successive children without any medical and special care adds to the health problem of the women. Sometimes, male agree for the practice of family planning methods but taunting attitude of fellow women and criticism by elderly women is the major hurdle in practice. If any married woman practices contraceptive method, she has to face taunting jokes and fun of the neighbouring and relatives women.

In greater Cholistan, there is no concept of family planning. Women believed that it is sinful activity and direct intervention in the divine will. Besides, male partners never allow them to practice any of the contraceptive method.

6.1.9 Women Using Tobacco as Relief from Health Problems

In the Cholistan, there is wide spread use of *niswar* (powdered tobacco) among the women. Commonly, when any woman feels flu or headache, she takes *niswar* which has made many of them addicted to it. The number of women *niswar* user is higher than men in Cholistan. There are different reasons for common use of *nisawr* by women such as females suffer from more health problems than males, besides they are more conscious about seeking immediate relief than men. Cholistani women produce two justifications for use of *niswar*. Firstly, it is thought to be a treatment not an addiction; secondly it is not perceived socially bad. Women including young girls smoke cigarette for prevention of gas trouble and headache. This trend is especially widespread in lesser Cholistan where men brought cigarettes from settled areas for their women. Women's smoking is socially acceptable within Cholistan but some times they hide it from strangers.

6.1.10 Changing Role of Women in Health Care

Role of Cholistani women is very significant and multidimensional in health care. From past, here women have assumed responsibility of taking care of health of family members. In both parts of Cholistan, patient care is the sole responsibility of women. There are some herbs which grow seasonally and are used for the treatment of various diseases. It is the responsibility of the woman to collect and store these herbs for future use. Her role did not end up here, she has to mix various herbs, make it a potion or syrup and give it to a patient. Not only herbal medicines but special food, if needed is, also prepared by women. In case, if the amulet(s) is taken for the treatment of the patient, it is the responsibility of the women to wrap it properly in a cloth and tie it on arm or around the neck of the patient.

With the passage of time and introduction of alternate methods of treatment, roles of women have also changed. Currently in lesser Cholistan, there is shift in the role of woman. Men have to arrange conveyance and medicine for the patient whereas women have to take care about the proper use of medicines and food for the patient at home.

In greater Cholistan, still women have the sole responsibility to prepare and provide herbal medicines. Many of the elderly women are considered to be the authority in female health related problems. Their opinion is given so much weightage and importance in some cases of severe health problem, opinion of the physician is not thought of as much necessary as of her.

6.2 Part-II: Women and Education Institution in Cholistan

This section contains an introductory paragraph on education in nomads followed by a detailed discussion about the education in nomads of Cholistan, both formal and informal education in greater and lesser Cholistan. Further, the role of women in transferring education and skills to next generation and change happened during the last forty years is discussed.

Education is the most significant indicator of socio-economic development and change. The manifest function of the education is to facilitate new generation in getting knowledge and skills that are necessary to lead their life as a member of the society successfully and without harming its normal functioning²⁷⁷. Education also deals with learning culture and transmission of society's core values from one generation to another by formal as well as informal educational system²⁷⁸. According to conflict perspective, education causes social differentiation, discrimination as by IQ test, promote hidden curriculum like obedience etc.²⁷⁹ but educational provision for nomad children is not an easy and simple task. It is controversial and emotive as well. For the known history, desert people educated their children in the socio-cultural and economic knowledge which is transmitted from one generation to next.

During the past two decades, the field of scholarship attending the education of the nomadic *ever-moving* communities has grown enough. New and innovative methods of research have been applied to understand the perception and practices as well as the problems of education of these mobile communities of diverged ethnicities, life styles and occupations. It has been observed by some experts that the formal education cannot be of any use to the nomads in their later life.

*The nomad is certainly an awkward customer for the services and structures of the modern education system. It is very difficult to provide them with classes or clinics, or take any of the advantages of this social service*²⁸⁰.

²⁷⁷ Alex Thio, *Sociology*, 4th ed.(New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1996). 3.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.482.

²⁷⁹ William C NesSmith, *Thinking Sociologically: An Introduction to the Discipline*(Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1995).

²⁸⁰ Caroline Dyer, *The Education of Nomadic Peoples: Current Issues, Future Prospects*(ITESO, 2006).

6.2.1 Education in Cholistan

The geography, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, has deep impacts on the social structure and institutions particularly when the induced change is goal oriented.

Education in Cholistan is a matter of the last quarters of the 20th century. After the establishment of CDA, the modern education system was introduced the decade of 1980 on a very small scale. Before, there was no concept of education and schools. To the maximum, mosques were used by a few to read the holy Quran and learn prayers. That too, was dependent upon the availability of water and fodder for the herds as most of the population was having a nomadic life and stay at a place was limited depending upon availability of water.

The rest of education was informal in the shape of learning how to tend cattle herds, how to do the handicraft work, job mostly done by females. This type of informal learning was through watch and learn method and needed no specific syllabus, course work, age specification and certification. This has been the entire education in the desert since centuries and the change induced in the shape of formal education in the Cholistan is a recent phenomenon. But in practice, even today, there exist some ghost schools in the desert which has been a source of income for the corrupt officials but not a source of learning or formal education.

This change is not occurring at the same pace in the widely spread Cholistan; it varies from simply having awareness about education in certain areas to going for higher education in other. This variation is not only subject to geographical territory but it also to household status and gender. All these variations are studied on the basis of two major divisions of desert depending upon the features of greater and lesser Cholistan.

While looking in the context of Cholistan, we find different type of education such as informal education, formal education, formal religious education, informal skill learning

in the state run schools. Aim of these institutions is just to introduce and not necessarily, to prepare the young generation for shouldering the future responsibilities as bringing this into the notice of the international community will yield nothing than embarrassment for the state. Formal learning includes the structured institutionalized training with learning objective and certification. Informal learning comes from daily life as people learn their native language unconsciously and without certification. Informal learning come with adaptability other than formal education which is also sometime out of formal educational and training institutions but structured in learning objective²⁸¹.

6.2.2 Education in Greater Cholistan

As mentioned earlier, the pace and availability of the formal education in the desert is subject to many conditions including geography, family and clan structure and status. The acquisition of knowledge in greater Cholistan is too difficult, if not impossible. Due to certain factors like environmental, socio-economic conditions and the state role in provision of the educational facilities are major causes of making education phenomenon tough. The intensity of weather conditions compel Cholistan people to fight for survival only. In the summer season, when the mercury goes beyond 50 Celsius in day time, movement outside the *ghopa* is not only impossible but fatal as well. Scarcity of drinking water adds to hardships of local people. Nomads in Cholistan keep on moving from one place to another in search of water that is why that their children cannot attend schools regularly. The nature of economic activities also serves as a motivational factor for going or not going for education. In case of greater Cholistan, apparently education is not a rewarding in term of rising economically.

Since animal husbandry is the only source of income, so people of Cholistan opine that it makes no difference either the person is educated or not for looking after animals. As

²⁸¹Zaman, Qamar , "Analysis of the Literate Cholistan Project in Bahawalpur Division," Department of Education. (The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan, 2009.unpublished thesis of Master)

in vast areas of the deep desert, there is no trend as well facilities for getting education, people do not have aspirations for formal education, so as a matter of fact, greater Cholistan is out of range of any formal education system.

Here concept of education is limited to just learning of ways of life of their elders and related skills which are necessary to lead their life in desert. Their life pattern seems having no requirement for education. In the past, people were even not acquainted with the concept of formal education system. Transfer of family skills is necessary for survival in dessert and transfer of religious knowledge has been in the informal way.

Gender discrimination, being an admitted fact in most of the third world countries, is also rampant in Pakistan. Cholistan, as one of most backward areas of Pakistan, is a living example. Lack of social awareness and local cultural values restrict the mobility of women, plays an important role in keeping females away from formal education. Geographical conditions of Cholistan have made it nearly inaccessible for CDA and other public and private welfare organizations to reach and take initiatives for launching education and awareness in greater part. Latest fact and figure of the education department Yazman, District Bahawalpur shows that;-

In greater Cholistan, having an area of 18130 square Kilometres, there are 7 state run formal schools and due to inaccessibility by the children, no private sector organization has intervened in the desert area regarding starting and promotion of formal education²⁸².

In both parts of the Cholistan, the no. of students and schools is summarized in the following table²⁸³.

²⁸²Government of the Punjab (2013) *Monthly Progress Report by Literacy Coordinator* Cholistan Development Authority Bahawalpur: Literate Cholistan Project dated Date: 4/03/13

²⁸³Ibid.

Table. 2 Summary of Schools and Enrolment in Cholistan (both parts)

U.C Name	High Schools		Elementary Schools		Primary schools		Co-Schools Primary
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Mir Grah	Nil	Nil	01	01	Nil	Nil	Nil
Derawar	Nil	Nil	01	Nil	16	01	25
Meerana	01	01	Nil	03	21	02	30
Chanan Peer	02	Nil	02	01	16	01	14
75/DB	Nil	Nil	01	02	20	02	37
Islam Garh	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	01	Nil	03
178/7-R	Nil	Nil	02	Nil	19	Nil	22
Total	03	01	07	07	93	06	131

Schools run by CDA, NCHD NEF, PEF (2013)

The table shows that there were nearly 250 schools run by the state as well as different charities. There were only four high schools out of which three were meant for boys while only one for girls. There are 14 elementary schools with equal number for boys and girls. There are 99 primary level schools out of which 93 are for boys and only six for girls. Out of the 131 co-education primary schools, the biggest number are run by Cholistan Development Authority (CDA), National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), National Education Foundation (NEF) and the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF).

Table 3. Number of Schools and Enrolment in Cholistan (both parts)

Tehsil	District	Govt. Schools	NEF Schools	LCP	Enrolment
Yazman	Bahawalpur	100	23	40	13110
Fortabbas	Bahawalnagar	6	0	11	1250
Liaqatpur	RahimyarKhan	22	0	24	3349
Total		128	23	75	17709

Source: Office Record of CDA, 2013.

In terms of enrolment, there are nearly over 10,000 boys as compared to less than 5,000 girls²⁸⁴. The gender wise enrolment in government schools is disappointing as only 1957 girls are enrolled in all schools as compared to 10,028 boys. This speaks about will of

²⁸⁴Cholistan Development Authority, office record, (2013)

the state and investment in female education which has been the lowest as compare to the cities and rural areas of the country.

6.2.3 Education in Lesser Cholistan

As people of lesser Cholistan have been in the close proximity of the urban and developed areas. They have interaction and understanding of the world outside the Cholistan and hence education is a known phenomenon for them. There are some functionally literate elder men and women.

Cholistan is an area where formal education is recently an emerging phenomenon. In all areas of lesser Cholistan, a large number of formal educational institutions are functional which brings changes in every walk of life. Here, with availability of educational facilities, the tendency of sending children for schooling is growing, resultantly change in awareness and attitude towards education is noticeable. But yet this does not seem to be a concern of common man where only relatively well-off class of the community is availing these educational facilities.

Formal educational structure of lesser Cholistan consist of two types of educational institutions i-e public institutions run by the state and the schools/institutions run by different voluntary welfare organizations, here there are no private schools. State run schools have different level of education ranging from step one to secondary level. Such institutions have also been established near *tobas* and settlements. Till today few parents prefer to send their children to get education from *madarassa* as these institutions offer free education, including free boarding, lodging, books, clothes and food.

Statistical data show that government and non-governmental sector focusing on formal education and on the average 91 boys and 18 girl students are getting education per school. This figure manifests that people are utilizing education facilities if are accessible to

them. We can also understand the situation by statistical analysis of Govt. schools in Cholistan given in this table.

Table 4. Education Facilities for Male and Female (Govt. Schools Only)

District	Govt. Schools	Level of schools	Male	Female	Male Enrolment	Female Enrolment
Bahawalpur	100	Primary	79	6	8015	1622
		Elemy.	4	8		
		High	2	1		
Bahawal-nagar	6	Primary	3	2	195	335
		Elemy		1		
		High				
Rahimyar Khan	22	Primary	20	0	1818	0
		Elemy	2	0		
		High	0	0		
Total	128		110	18	10028	1957

Source: Department of Education, Bahawalpur division. (Average no. of boys/ school=91. Average no. of girls /school=108)

As data explicit that out of total 128 Govt. schools, there are only 18 for girls while rest of 110 are meant for boys. Major focus of education is mostly on males, but interestingly where education facilities are available, female have also tendency to get education. It shows that availability of facilities can cause drastic changes for the improvement of female education in Cholistan. In the lesser Cholistan areas, school going girls in dress code are found on the ways to school and home.

Private educational institutions are also available in the nearby urban areas. In the settlements of lesser Cholistan nearer to settled towns, parents also send their children to private schools. The enthusiasm on the part of people in Cholistan can be judged from the example that many parents have hired rickshaws and other vehicles for educating their children in private higher secondary schools. Researcher came to know that few rich people have acquired accommodations in urban areas for educating their children; similarly many others have admitted school going children to boarding houses and hostels.

Cholistani people make different arrangement for financing education of their children. In the absence of any regular income source, they get money by selling milk and butter in the settled areas for meeting routine expenditures of children's education. But when there is an annual fee or a large amount of money payable at once, parents sell their animals depending upon amount required. In case, if any of the relative or family friend is living in the urban areas, male children are sent to stay with them until they complete their education.

The allotment of state land to the locals for farming and other allied purposes like cattle breeding, poultry farming and, dairy farming has entirely changed the social structure in lesser Cholistan. Those who are allotted lands, now tend to become sedentary in nature and have adopted dwelling on the farm lands or in the settled areas breaking the families into nuclear system. Mostly these settlements are out of access to the formal educational facilities. There is also a unique form of family type can not to be truly called nuclear family rather it is locally termed as *do ghar nizam* „two homes system“. One home in the desert to look after the cattles and the other in the urban or suburb to avail facilities for health, children education, food supply to the home in the desert in emergency etc.

This situation is beneficial for female education too. Those who were hesitant for sending daughters to schools and colleges in lesser Cholistan; are now relaxed to some extent that they have a house in the settled area as well. Here in this part of Cholistan, sources of communication are available, including the availability of roads (metallic, paved and unpaved), cellular phones, radios and televisions. They have better sources to travel from one place to another one, so all these sources have increased opportunities of interaction with the people of other towns and cities. This has brought a positive change in their mind, which is why now trend of female education in emerging. In the lesser Cholistan, too few girls are getting education up to the college level or sometimes even

higher level has been observed but higher education of women is not accepted at all levels. An interesting thing is that educated women keep struggling to prove their piety. Educated women sometimes suffer more as she has to win the trust of her family, because without strong family support, higher education of women in Cholistan is merely a fantasy. Sometimes, they have to be strictly following the tradition of putting veil as compared to uneducated women to prove themselves following the local culture. Common people in Cholistan are not aware about the importance of women education and ideal role of the women do not demand education in their mind set. But with passage of time, girls' education is comparatively acceptable, especially at primary level; even if there is no education system in the institution.

6.2.4 Problems in Education

Education in Pakistan faces a multiplicity of problems in general and the rural areas in particular. The main problems which haunt the education system can be enumerated as low quality of education in public sector schools, children drop-out rate, inaccessibility of schools for the children particularly girls. Furthermore lack of resources like drinking water and furniture, books and other reading and writing materials in the schools, absenteeism of teachers, lack of government monitoring, appointment of teachers on political basis than efficiency and ability of the teachers, corruption in management, ghost schools, etc.

With reference to education in Cholistan, a report of a national English Daily highlights the situation in these words:-

The CDA operates 75 community schools under the Literate Cholistan Project (LCP) started in 2009 with a total enrolment of 5,083 children. The senior and junior teachers were employed at a monthly emolument of Rs.5000/- and 2500/- per month. The salary of the junior teachers is four times less than an ordinary labourer gets. The govt. of Punjab fixed a minimum wage of Rs.9000/- for the lowest paid workers but teachers are paid less than that and as a result many teachers left the schools. Not only salary matters, the facilities at these schools are also awful. No text books are provided to the primary level students and there is no drinking water available at these schools. If the

*students needed drinking water, they had to return home which are two to three kilometers away. Similar is the provision of furniture. The students are forced to bring polythene bags to sit on. They come to school carrying books in one hand and a water vessel (pitcher or matka) in the other*²⁸⁵.

Most of rge teachers appointed in Cholistan are outsiders and there is hardly qualified male or female in the entire area to be appointed as teachers. Therefore, the question arises, how a woman coming from 50-60 miles away can live in a meager amount of PKR 2500/ month. Consequently, most teachers visit the schools only in last days of month for getting their salary. In Cholistan, when we look at the problems for getting education like lack of educational institutions, insufficient facilities such as qualified teachers and infrastructure which are required more than the settled areas. But, due to hard weather conditions, nomadic way of life largely affects the education phenomenon negatively, especially in greater Cholistan.

The official statistics about the no. of schools and students are also frowning down upon by many outsiders as well insiders. Keeping in view the overall presence of ghost schools in Pakistan, it is believed that a large number of schools also only exist on papers reason being the unavailability of monitoring system of educational institutions in Cholistan being an “out of sight and out of mind” area. Similar, the number of students getting education is also exaggerated, as in the deserts, in lieu of basic amenities like drinking water and jute or plastic mating or proper buildings for school; children do not turn up for schooling.

Inaccessibility of schools is another major problem contributing negatively towards education in Cholistan. In many cases, as observed by the researcher, the schools were not established at a reasonably convenient place where both boys and girls can go. In many cases, also mentioned in the newspaper report above, the distance is more than three kilometres and is difficult for a four to six years old child to reach the school by foot.

²⁸⁵*The Express Tribune, "Cholistan ", October, 8. 2012.*

6.2.5 Education and Change in Lesser Cholistan

Education is changing way of life of people in Cholistan. The trend of sending children to schools has greatly affected migration process in lesser Cholistan. This is one of the most important factors that have contributed towards a shift from nomadic life to sedentarization. In the past, there was no trend of education but now some children go to school and the parents whose children are studying in schools, did not migrate or leave their staying children behind. Now, few people stay at one place for continuity of education of their children because migration has negative effects on school going children and their attainment of education.

In lesser Cholistan, researcher came to know that in some families, girls have acquired education up to college levels in the private institutions and now they have been appointed as school teachers. This situation has totally changed the traditional outlook towards education, women and women roles.

6.2.6 Change in Role of Women in Greater Cholistan

Since formal education system is not found in greater Cholistan, this situation has called for more active roles and responsibilities of women to contribute in the informal education. In Cholistan, there are many informal skills which are integral part of economic life of Cholistan; these skills serve as tool for survival of people of Cholistan. From years after year, females are transmitting these skills from one generation to the next. These skills involve ; how to prepare *ghopa*; how to collect fuel wood, how to cook food, how to collect and store goods of daily usage and how to do embroidery, how to get and preserve water, how to manage life in scarcity of water. In the past, hardly there could be found an educated person in greater Cholistan and if there was some one educated or even literate that was just exception. Mothers educate young girls about their customs, traditions and behaviours.

In transmission of knowledge in Cholistan, women have a very important role to play in this regard; first, as learner and then as teacher. Elder women teach young females to be obedient to their males and be protective to their norms and tradition. Success of the training imparted to the next generation is measured by extent of obedience of young females.

In greater Cholistan, due to nonexistence of formal education system, two types of informal learning are necessary to perform expected roles in the society i-e religious education and skills in domestic chores. But with the passage of time and increased interaction with outer world, importance of education has increased among Cholistani people. With seasonal changes, they migrate from greater to lesser Cholistan or to the nearby urban and/or settled agricultural communities, where the institutions for education are available. Further, they have started becoming aware of the need and necessity of education. Now women in Cholistan, not only know the presence of educational institutions in the area, but also to some extent aware about its need and importance. They think that education is the key to a prosperous life that is why now they demand not only for drinking water but also schools.

As a result, recently, in greater Cholistan one can find some functionally literate people. The new situation is interesting as the new generation has more knowledge and interest about the world outside the desert. They have more questions which are sometime beyond the knowledge of elder generation. The elder generation is more conservative and ethnocentric. They teach the youngsters to resist social change by saying about any happening that: "*Abadi aaly paasy theenda hosy, sady pasy riwaj kaen nhi*" Things like this are being practiced in settled area.

In the tradition bound society of Cholistan, women strictly follow their culture in all spheres of life. Women themselves are not willing to step out of the cultural boundaries.

This subjugation of women to cultural practice is one of the factors influencing the pace of social change in Cholistan. Elderly women such as mother, grandmother and auntie have deep concern for the younger female to follow the prevailing culture and hence education is also discouraged in direct or indirect ways.

6.2.7 Change in Women Role in Lesser Cholistan

Now, there is a shift in the role of women in lesser Cholistan. Change in educational structure has multiplied the roles of the women. Women's role and responsibility of informal skill teaching and training about culture is still present. Mothers of this generation are hardly educated but they have to meet various requirements of new educational system. Now, they are also caretaker of formal education system. In families, mostly, the care is concern of women; therefore, if decision of education is taken by men, women have to be vigilant about the regularity of the education. It is important to know that what women think and how they perceive education. Moreover, the increase or decrease in their role also affects the level of education.

In informal education, role of women is more diverse in Cholistan because, now they have to preserve their culture with changing conditions of area. They have to decide about limits of assimilation and to search effective ways of communication, primitive ideas and introduced screened ideas.

Forty years back, a woman in Cholistan used to rise up early in the morning, cleaned the house, milked the cows and goat, sheep, prepared the breakfast, fed and watered the cattle at home, and in this way she remained busy all the day till late evening. Now, a woman migrates to the urban areas to look after her school going children. Now, her focus is more on children than livestock. She wakes up early in the morning, prepares breakfast for the kids and sends them to school. As an added responsibility, for the rest of the day, she is busy with other domestic chores. Too few women in lesser Cholistan are educated now,

go to office or schools as teacher and return in the afternoon. Economically, she is no more entirely dependent on the men; this has enhanced her status but she is yet not empowered in decision making. Few young women also carry mobile sets with them, put on sun glasses and wear up-to-date dresses unlike their predecessors. This is not the case of all women, but this is just the start and sooner, there will be more social change in Cholistan.

6.3 Part-III: Women and Economic Institution in Cholistan

In this section, different aspects of economic institutions in Cholistan have been discussed. The section starts with a general overview of the current economic activities in nomadic societies generally, and nature of economic activities in Cholistan particularly. In addition, it will discuss the change in the economic institution and related activities over the past forty years. Specifically, it will confer upon the economic role of women and shift in it with the passage of time.

6.3.1 Economic Activities in Nomadic Societies

Around the world, nomads play an important social role in one or the other way for and contribute for the development of the community and nation at large by providing certain social and economic services. Most of the countries having nomadic population depend upon them for provision of meat, milk, butter, hides and leather²⁸⁶. Nomads keep on moving even when there is good year; therefore they maintain herds of different animals for dairy and transportation purposes. For dairy products, they keep milking animals such as cows, camels, sheep and goats. For transportation, both donkeys and camels are used. Due to constant movement, nomads keep larger herds than they need, so they can sell animals to farmers during dry years²⁸⁷.

²⁸⁶Chimah Ezeomah, *Educating Nomads for Self-Actualization and Development*(UNESCO, 1990). p.3

²⁸⁷Jon Pedersen and Tor A Benjaminsen, "One Leg or Two? Food Security and Pastoralism in the Northern Sahel," *Human Ecology* 36, no. 1 (2008).173.

Animal husbandry is the major source of income for nomads. These people keep on moving in the form of group, mostly consisting of the same family or kinship. Major reason for migration of the nomadic population from place to place is the scarcity of water and fodder for their animals. Pastoralist nomads raising animals in arid and semi-arid parts of world, constantly keep on moving along with their herds during wet and dry season in search of water and fodder for animals²⁸⁸. Family members migrate along with their animals and stay at the place to avail seasonal pasture for their animals. Seasonal migration and division of animal husbandry are some of the characteristics of nomadic life style²⁸⁹. For the nomads, their herds are not only source for meeting financial needs but also they depend heavily on animals for their food. Livestock is major form of financial and social asset as well as a direct source of food²⁹⁰. In the pastoral economy, herds are the only source of income and meet all the basic needs of the herders. Nomads maintain a certain level of the herds as a security for provision of basic needs in the absence of any other economic opportunity giving same monetary return as animal husbandry. Among the nomads, without acquiring a certain size of livestock stock, sale of the animals does not increase. This practice does not maintain social status but it is also an economic strategy in the perspective of vulnerability as no other economic source is more benefitting than livestock²⁹¹.

6.3.2 Economic Activities in Cholistan

Cholistan being desert area with nomadic life style economically depends on livestock and its products. Major sources of income in Cholistan include livestock,

²⁸⁸ Ezeomah, *Educating Nomads for Self-Actualization and Development*. 6.

²⁸⁹ Manderscheid, "Decline and Re-Emergence of Nomadism: Tibetan Pastoralists Revive a Nomadic Way of Life and Production."

²⁹⁰ Aklilu and Catley, "Livestock Exports from the Horn of Africa: An Analysis of Benefits by Pastoralist Wealth Group and Policy Implications." 4.

²⁹¹ Ibid.4.

cultivation, textile and crafts²⁹². Traditional economy of pastoralist nomads is based on raising animals such as camels, cattles, buffalos, reindeer, goats and sheep. For them, size of the herd they own is the status symbol and their identity and respect depends on its size. Pastoralist nomads sell animals to get money for certain needs such as purchasing food items, carrying out arrangement of ceremonies, medication for both human and animals, or avail the material possession such as clothes, utensil for daily use, radio and anything as a conveyance^{293, 294}. Generally, in the informal economy of Cholistan, all the members of the family contribute in the earning activities in one way or the other for securing bread and butter for their survival. Cholistani people do not possess formal education and skills, therefore, they cannot avail any job opportunities in the settled areas except labour work. People from Cholistan go to nearby settled areas for helping in harvesting crops; they get reward for labour work through barter system. They are given grain or fodder as return by settled areas landowners.

Women in Cholistan have also a significant contribution in the economic activities. Roles of women are multifaceted and dynamic ranging from looking after the herds to selling milk and its products. Hence, their participation in economic activities adds to the family income. Total human population of Cholistan is 0.155 million with possession of more than 1.6 million livestock²⁹⁵. Economic activities in Cholistan revolve around following sources.

6.3.3 Livestock and its Products

From centuries, people raise livestock for survival in the Cholistan. They sell their animals when they need money for buying daily food items such as wheat flour, rice, pulses

²⁹² Dar, *Sights in the Sands of Cholistan: Bahawalpur's History and Architecture*.

²⁹³ Ezeomah, *Educating Nomads for Self-Actualization and Development*. 6.

²⁹⁴ Akhter and Arshad, "Arid Rangelands in the Cholistan Desert (Pakistan)."1.

²⁹⁵ Cholisatna Development Authority, office record (2013)

and clothes. Similarly, when there is a marriage ceremony in close relatives or other social events such as annual carnival of *Chanan peer*, then animals are sold as per their financial needs to meet expenditures.

In Cholistan, people move in search of water for themselves and animals, also pastures for their livestock on seasonal basis. When there is no rain for a long time and all the *tobas* get dry, people move from greater Cholistan to the lesser Cholistan and then to the settled areas. This migratory pattern has undergone change on the account of economic activities. After rains and availability of adequate water in the deep desert, Cholistani people divide their manpower and livestock into two parts; one part of manpower remains with milking animals in the settled areas so that they can sell the milk and its products while the remaining animals and manpower depart towards greater Cholistan for grazing non-milking animals on free of cost available pastures. Nomadic people adopt a mixed approach for enhancing household income; milking animals are kept in nearby settlement for selling milk readily at better price, while remaining animals which are not milking are kept in deep desert for grazing in the open pastures²⁹⁶.

In Cholistan, animals are either milk producing or otherwise called as „dry animals“ (not producing milk). Milk is used for domestic purposes as well as it is sold for earning money. In lesser the Cholistan, currently, there are about ten milk collection centres/ Chiller where milk is collected and stored for some time.

In the greater Cholistan, where milk collection centres are far from the living place and daily access is impossible, local people convert milk into butter and butter milk. Butter is sold in the nearby villages and town. The dry animals are sold for fulfilment of cash needs. Cattle-breeding is the major source of income as on eve of *Eid-ul-Azha* in Pakistan, there is a

²⁹⁶ Ahmad, "Agro-Pastoral Systems in Cholistan."65.

great demand of sacrificial animals providing an opportunity to the people of Cholistan to sell their livestock

6.3.4 Seasonal Cultivation

As discussed in Chapter 2, greater Cholistan consists of ever-changing and high altitude sandy dunes with acute scarcity of water. The surface of underground water is deep from earth surface; furthermore its quality is not suitable for irrigation due to salinity. Besides, there are no facilities of electricity and other basic infrastructure needed for cultivation.

Therefore, in the greater Cholistan, in the absence of agro-farming, natural pastures provide fodder for the animals. Nomads in Cholistan use territory for raising animals which convert the natural pasture into nutritional requirements. It includes milk and several of its products like meat, animals for riding, hairs, skin and wool²⁹⁷.

Although, major part of the greater Cholistan consists of sand dunes, not suitable for cultivation, yet there are some areas between sand dunes which have been levelled and are used for cultivation. The only source of irrigation is seasonal rainfall which makes cultivation a rare option. Underground water in Cholistan has high ratio of salts and hence not suitable for irrigation nor drinking purposes.

After rain, desert people sow some crops such as barley and mustard which are not much rewarding in term of money. They get some grains for partial fulfilment of their food requirements. Underground water in the desert area is salty and so not fit for cultivation and human as well as livestock drinking²⁹⁸ that is why cultivation in desert area is not much beneficial for Cholistani people, hence agriculture has least contribution in household

²⁹⁷ Spooner, *The Cultural Ecology of Pastoral Nomads*.17.

²⁹⁸ Government of Pakistan, "Research Study on Evaluation of Impact of Research and Development Projects Implementation on Desertification in Cholistan,"(Islamabad, Pakistan: Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR, 2004).

income. The inadequacy of water makes it necessary for local population to adopt nomadic life style in search of water and fodder²⁹⁹.

Forty years back, cultivation was also dependent on seasonal rainfall in lesser Cholistan but currently, situation is different from it. There is growing interest of the people in lesser Cholistan for cultivation of some crops. Since they work in the agro fields of farmers from settled areas, therefore it inspires them for carrying out this activity by themselves. Furthermore, presently, some areas have been supplied canal water for irrigation other than tube wells installed in sweet water areas. Particularly, in district Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalpur and areas of lesser Cholistan under army control have been supplied canal water. This has geared the cultivation activities in the Cholistan area.

6.3.5 Labour Work in Settled Areas

Household income is directly dependent on seasonal rainfall. If there are timely and enough rains, natural grass grows which means more fodder and hence healthy animals which fetch more money for owners. Rain also helps cultivate barley and mustard which are sold for money. In case of timely and enough seasonal rains, local population do not need to migrate to the other places in search of water and can take care of their animals in better way. On the contrary, if there are no rains, then it becomes inevitable to migrate for saving both human life and livestock. In the migration period, Cholistani people work with the farmers of the local area for securing water and fodder for their animals. People who live near irrigated areas, also go for labour work. On the other hand, if there is no need for migration, then animals graze in the open and vast desert. In the absence of rains, when Cholistani people migrate to the settled areas, they have to be careful about their animals and cannot let their animals grazing free anywhere because animals can damage to the nearby crops.

²⁹⁹ M.A. Kahlown et al., "Prospectus of Growing Barley and Mustard with Saline Groundwater Irrigation in Fine-and Coarse-Textured Soils of Cholistan Desert," *Irrigation and Drainage* 58, no. 4 (2009).

6.3.6 Cotton and Wool Products

Home-based textile industry has a considerable contribution in the economy of Cholistan; local people earn some money by selling handmade clothes prepared from cotton and wool. In Cholistan, fine quality hand knitted carpets, especially made of camel wool, are produced which are matchless in the market. Woolen blankets, rugs, shawls, and a variety of other crafts are made out of the available indigenous wool. Blankets and warm clothes are necessity of the locals to compete the cold, windy, freezing nights of the desert. Cholistan is also famous for woolen *Khes* and *pattu*. Moreover, Cholistani *Chunri* is very popular in the region for giving as gift to the outsiders. There are specific families who have this technical skill for centuries and transferring it to from generation to generation. These looms owner and traditionally skilled families live in the desert area, therefore they have no formal marketing system for their products; that is why, they get minimal financial return.

6.3.7 Textiles

Khaddar cloth, coarse cotton made fabric warm in winters and cold in summers is used by locals. Fine *khaddar* bed sheets and coarse *lungies* are woven here. A locally hand knitted cloth called as *Sufi*, a mix of silk and cotton or cotton wrap and silk wool, meant for use of elites, is made here. *Gargras* of numerous colours and patterns, with fine and complicated embroidery of mirror and patchwork are knitted here. *Ajrak* is another specialty of Cholistan. It is a special and delicate printing technique on both sides of the cloth in indigo blue and red patterns covering the base cloth. Cotton turbans and shawls are also made here.

6.3.8 Camel Products

Camels or desert ship is a status symbol as well as economic source for local people. It is one the most important animal among the livestock of the desert dwellers. Camels are used not only for transportation and as a pack animal, but its skin and wool are also of economic value. Camel wool is spun and woven into beautiful woolen blankets known as

falsies and rugs of a variety. The camel's leather is also utilized in making *kuppies*, goblets, and expensive lampshades.

6.3.9 Leather Work

Hide and leatherwork is also a flourishing cottage industry in the Cholistan. It is flourishing because of the availability of livestock here which is a way of the local economy. *Khusa* (leather made shoes) is a specialty of this area. Cholistani *khusa*, moccasin is very famous for the quality and comfort of feet as well as workmanship, variety of designs are found especially when stitched and embroidered with golden or brightly colored threads.

6.3.10 Change in Economic Activities

There has occurred visible change in nature of economic activities in lesser Cholistan during last forty years. In order to develop agriculture and dairy farming in both parts of the Cholistan, a total of 2,82,241 acres of land has been allotted to 21961 persons/companies for developing the land for agriculture on personal basis as well as corporate basis. The land for corporate farming is about 50,000 acres each of 500 and 800 acres plots to registered firms under Companies ordinance 1984 for a price of 25,00 rupees/acre bank guarantee. Rs. 100,000/ investment on each acre for livestock breeding and Rs. 200,000/- acres for poultry breeding shall be required. The total cost of the project shall be invested within 48 months during 2009 and onwards. In addition to these economic development measures, 300 Community worker have been trained in community uplift, 100 community *tobas* to provide easy access of water to 100 communities, 10 turbines to pull under-ground water, 20 solar chillers for preserving milk, 10 bio gas plants to overcome the fuel problem and clean and hygienic cooking , modern abattoir, feed mills and fattening programmes were proposed during the last three years and electrification of 21 villages

and the new solar electrification system of 1000 MW³⁰⁰ will bring positive social and economic changes.

6.3.11 Role of Women in Economic Activities

From last forty years, women in Cholistan have been playing various direct and indirect roles in the economic activities. They have significant role in caring for livestock which is one of the major subsistence and earning source. In the greater Cholistan, their responsibilities include bringing fodder for their milking animals because some animals are kept at home while main herd is driven by men for grazing in the deep desert areas. Women milk the animals at home and prepare butter which is one of the sources for household income. In most of cases, males move out of home with the herds and women shoulder the responsibility of fetching water from nearby *toba* or well for animals at home. Adult animals can travel for grazing and drinking water even in the severe hot weather but lambs and calves cannot resist to severe heat, which is why they are kept at home under the care of women. Usually, there is wood-made fence under the shady tree where these small animals are kept and entire care responsibility lies with the women.

Migration is a dominant feature of desert life for utilizing next available water source and pasture; women play an important role during migratory period along with men. Pastoralism is based purely on natural pastures and demands for constant migration because no natural pasture can support herds for long time³⁰¹. In addition, women in lesser Cholistan also move to agriculture fields in the settled areas for doing multiple jobs such as helping in sowing crops, putting herbicides and pesticides in the plants and harvesting wheat. Their reward for work can be either in cash or kind which is utilized for meeting family needs.

³⁰⁰ Government of the Punjab (2008) CDA presentation on the Chief Minister visit to Cholistan dated 17.12.2008.

³⁰¹ Spooner, *The Cultural Ecology of Pastoral Nomads*. p.21

6.3.12 Change in Economic Roles of Women

In the Cholistan, women's role in the economy has witnessed change over the last four decades. In the past, women churn the milk for preparing butter which was sold to the people of the settled area for money. At present, this practice has changed; now, women go to the nearby milk collection centre or settled area. They move in group carrying milk pot on their heads and sell it for earning, this amount is used for purchasing edibles for daily use for the whole family; hence, women contribute in the economic activities for supporting whole family.

In lesser Cholistan, currently herd size has reduced due to squeezing free pastures. Therefore, people are more dependent on small scale cultivation and working as agricultural labourer. Cotton is major crop of settled areas in surroundings of lesser Cholistan. Women of lesser Cholistan form a major part of agriculture labour force. They work as daily wager in sowing and picking cotton. Women travel on daily basis for several miles on tractor-trolley and animal carts to reach the fields where they do work for long hours just for little money.

Since last forty years, women in the lesser Cholistan have played significant role in animal husbandry. In this area, there are some strips of arable land but due to unavailability of water, cultivation is carried out on limited level. That is why dwellers are majorly dependent on the herds for survival. Still women fetch water for animals from nearby *toba* and collect fodder from the surroundings for feeding them.

In the past, one of the roles of women was milking animal and churning the milk. They prepared butter from the milk and stored it in some pots till the time they could sell it in the settled areas. Presently, with the introduction of technology, social and economic change has made its way in the lesser Cholistan. As compared to greater Cholistan, there is more availability of water from different sources such as CDA water supply schemes and

streams flowing in the area. Now, people of this area are more focusing on cultivation and other sources of earning. It has resulted into sedentarization. In the nomadic economy, women play their role in family income by selling milk and different products in the markets. In the rainy season, they help their male members in sowing crops. On the other hand, in the most of the cases, sedentarization means social and economic deterioration resulting in loss of animals and wealth. Therefore, state of men being workless means more burdens on women³⁰².

When there are adequate rains in the Cholistan, some member of the family migrate towards greater Cholistan for grazing herds in free available pastures because after raining there are enough natural pastures for animals especially in greater Cholistan. On the other hand, the people in the lesser Cholistan need to spend money for feeding their animals. Common practice is that male members migrate to the deeper desert with herds of non-milking and stay there until they found free pasture. During this duration, women stay at home with one or two adult males and children. They contribute equally in cultivation process with their male family members. Sometimes, labour work is exchanged with relatives and neighbours. Under this practice, for mutually agreed period, herds of other family are taken care on exchange basis. Pastoralist living in towns or farms mostly own herds which are herded by close relatives or friends in pastoral economy. There is also another practice under which the division of household manpower into two parts, some do herding while others as daily wagers in the farming or non-farming sectors³⁰³.

³⁰²Ibrahim, "The Role of Women Peasants in the Process of Desertification in Western Sudan." p.4

³⁰³Elliott Fratkin and Eric A Roth, "As Pastoralists Settle: Social, Health, and Economic Consequences of Pastoral Sedentarization in Marsabit District, Kenya. New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers (2005).

7. Chapter-VII: Data Analysis on Marriage, Family and Religion

This chapter has three parts. In part-I, we have analysed the marriage institution, in part-II, family as social institution in Cholistan has been discussed and part-III gives analysis of the religion in the desert.

7.1 Part-I: Marriage

“Shadyaan tey dahdhi khoshi krendy hann” We celebrate marriage with great excitement.

“Apni zaat tay zuban chi shadi keeti waindi ay” Marriage is decided within own caste and linguistic group.

“Sadi dhyan nhi boldyan jeho ja vee risthta kito” Wherever the marriage is decided, our daughters do not even speak a single word.

“Dhee behen apny ghar sohni lagdi ay” Daughters and sisters are best suited at husband’s home.

These were some of the notable expressions of women respondents about marriage in Cholistan. These responses reflect that marriage is celebrated with excitement and people wait for months and years for attending a marriage ceremony. Here marriage is one of the events that provide opportunity for large scale get together of members of the same clan. Marriage is arranged within family and caste and mostly on the basis of *watta satta* (exchange marriage). Second marriage is accepted only under certain conditions and divorce is rare.

Women were treated like objects rather than human beings while deciding about marriage and even after post marriage life. They were not supposed to express their consent for liking and disliking about marriage; women who accepted the marriage decision without raising any objection were considered good and were socially appreciated. Reflection of marital status through dress and jewelry meant that whole life of a woman revolved around marriage. A married woman was never supposed to come back

to her parental home on the account of conflict with husband or in-laws. She was advised by parents that you should die at her husband's home. This advice reflects that a woman is not supposed to leave her husband in any case, no matter how much she suffers and is discriminated.

When respondents were asked about celebration of marriage in Cholistan, they shared with excitement about different segments and celebrations during marriage. In Cholistan, most important task of people was fulfilment of basic needs like drinking water, food, health and shelter for survival. Hence there were rarely opportunities of recreation and social get together of those fellows living beyond one's own *toba*. In such society, marriage was long awaited ceremony and celebrated with great happiness. Through participation in marriage celebrations, researcher observed that in hostile conditions of Cholistan, arranging marriage was thought out as one of the major achievement and happiness in the life of local people. Cholistanis expressed it in these words: "*Shadi tey dher khushi karyn dy henn*" There is lot of happiness and joy in the celebration of the marriage.

In response to question about marriage age in Cholistan, respondents unveiled that there was practice of early marriage. They fixed proposal mostly immediate after birth of a child and arranged marriage after reaching age of puberty which is usually 13-16 years. In lesser Cholistan, now marriage age has gone up to 17, whereas in many cases in past, it was only 14 years. Specifically Hindus had firm believe in early marriage. They sometime arranged marriage during childhood of boys and girls. In such marriage, bride stayed at her parent's home till puberty, after that she was sent to her in laws. They said about it: "*Jawan hendy ee nikki kon sohry ghar bhej deta wainda ay*" Daughter was sent to her in-laws immediately after gaining puberty.

One major reason for early marriage of women in Cholistan was that there was least importance of the education and financial stability of the groom or bride. It was because in the joint family system, men got financial assistance from their parental family. Therefore, they have nothing to do with the arrangement and celebrations of marriage. That was why at present, especially in lesser Cholistan marriage age was increasing with rise in education and economic independency. In the lesser Cholistan, now boys were sent to nearby city for education, so their average marriage age was more than girls who were at home and could be married at any age.

When it was asked about decision making of marriage, respondents from greater Cholistan told that from past till date, elder men of the family made decision of marriage. *Numberdar* (village headman) was also consulted before making final decision. This decision was not only about selection of mate, it was also about all the matters related to marriage such as time of marriage, level of celebration, venue and menu for guests and number of guests to be invited etc. Bride and her mother or any women was not asked about their liking and disliking only men were decision makers. Women were not supposed to say anything regarding decision made by the men of the family. They expressed obedience of their daughters in these words: “*Sadi dhyan nhi boldyan jehojya risthta kito*” Our daughters never spoke about whatever the decision of marriage was being taken.

They told that presently, in greater Cholistan, still close relatives (men) made decisions of marriage. Contrary to the past practice, when tribe members were called for finalizing marriage, now only close relatives were sought their opinion. Some respondents told that now only few people include *numberdar* in decision making of marriage, they said: “*Kujh lok numbardar ton vee poch ghindy henn*” Only some people did ask from village headman about marriage.

Respondents from lesser Cholistan told that in the past, marriage decision making lied with elder men of the family and seeking willingness of the girl was not considered important. Girls were just informed about the decision made. But at present, there was change in this practice. Some of the respondents from lesser Cholistan told that now liking and disliking of men was asked and given some importance. Two respondents told that some people took stand for compatibility of spouse for their daughters. They expressed like this: "*Kaeen kaeen niki da jor dithha wainda ay*" Few people consider compatibility of spouse for their daughter before fixing proposal.

Consideration of couple match in lesser Cholistan at the time of deciding marriage is indicator that increase in educational and awareness level has resulted in realization of human rights of women in desert area. Level of awareness and education makes difference in the practice of human rights in lesser and greater Cholistan. Preference of liking and disliking of men than the women shows that despite education and awareness, patriarchy is dominant in the Cholistan just like everywhere Pakistani society where mostly bride is never allowed to speak.

Two respondents told that elderly women also participated in decision making but their status was not to defer the decision. They said: "*Hun choti Rohi wich koi koi waderyan ton vee poch ghinda ay per wadyaan di gal ee manni waindi ay*" Currently, Some people in lesser Cholistan ask from elderly women but final decision is of the men.

In decision making regarding women marriage, any of personal characteristics like age, look or financial status was not given significance in her spouse. It was reflection of the poor status of women as member of the family and society. A woman was taken more as an object than a person. Some respondents from lesser Cholistan expressed that now little attention was given to couple compatibility. "*Hun koi koi jawan choti Rohi apni marzi karyndy ny*" Now, few young man in lesser Cholistan went for love marriage.

When respondents from greater Cholistan were asked about preferences for selection of life partner, most of them shared that they preferred arrange marriage within their own caste and ethnic group. The researcher came to know that homogamy was massively practiced because people do not want to take risk of getting married out of family. They felt insecure and uncertain about unknown family, so they do not marry out of close family. Within family and clan, they felt secured and expected that if and when there would be any conflict among married couple, close relatives would intervene and problem would be settled. They said: “*Apniv zat tay zuban wich shadi keeti waindi ay*” Marriage is arranged within caste and ethnic group.

In the past, marriages were arranged within caste in lesser Cholistan but some respondents told that currently, there was not as such strong resistance for out of caste marriage. Sometimes, they decided to marry out of family and caste when there was no proposal available. One respondent told that she has married her son out of caste because there was no proposal for him in their caste.

When Hindu respondents were asked about marriage, they reported that cousin-marriage was prohibited in their religious teachings, so they arranged marriage in distant relatives. Elder men decided marriage and then visited spiritual leader in Sukhar (district in Sindh (A province of Pakistan) for the asking the lucky date for marriage. Marriage was arranged on the given date given by spiritual leader at all costs; no matter there was any death in the family on that day. They believed that if they would not hold marriage on given date, it will cause misfortune and marriage would be a failure. Just like among Muslims, exchange marriage was also common in Hindus. They said: “*Zyada tar watta satta kryyndy henn*” In most of the cases, we preferred exchange marriage.

When it was asked about practices in case when there was no availability of proposal for exchange, respondents told that in past, when a married man did not have

male child and there was no girl in the family for exchange marriage, father got married in exchange of his daughter. Some respondents told that in such cases, marriage was arranged through *pait-likhi* (fixation of marriage before birth of a girl). Three of the respondents told that marriage was arranged through *phori* (buying bride for money). In case, groom family was poor for paying bride price, then clan members contributed money for payment of bride. It reflects that there is strong social bond among tribe members in Cholistan and marriage of men is given preference over women. There was no unity observed or reported about arranging such marriage for a woman, whereas for men, whole clan came forward and paid price for the bride. They said: "*Koi rishty dar dy diti koi lok zaal pasyan ton ly lyndy ny jey na hon pase ty Phori kar lyto*" Few people bring bride with money, sometimes they also collect money from relatives.

When it was inquired after that if there was no proposal for a woman, some respondents told that in such cases, she had to lead a bachelor life. If family of such woman was financially sound, in too few cases, they sent her for offering *hajj* as compensation of not getting married, some times she is just called as *hajjin*. She was to spend her rest of life at parental home. This practice indicates inferior status of women in Cholistan, they are called with religious title as compensation of marriage which is a social and biological need for human being.

Different practices regarding marriage reflected that in Cholistan prime objective of marriage was procreation. Reproduction of children and specifically baby boy was more important for men just like it is found everywhere in patriarchal society of Pakistans. Men were highly ambitious for continuation of their generation. In the Cholistan desert from the past till date, when there was no proposal for a woman in family, she had to spend her life without marrying. On the other hand, if they did not find a proposal for a man, they decided the marriage of female baby in exchange before her birth. If this option was not

-serving the purpose, they paid price for bride. Researcher came to know that procreation was highly desired without giving importance to feelings and emotions of a woman. This mind set could be understood through practices of marrying men under *phori* and *pait likhai*.

When asked about duration of celebration of marriage, respondents shared that duration of marriage celebrations have reduced as compared to past. In the past, they celebrated marriage for several weeks and sometimes for month but now marriage was celebrated for 6-7 days in greater Cholistan and 3-4 days in lesser Cholistan. Prolonged stay of guests at the marriage was because travelling within Cholistan was comparatively more difficult in the past, that is why usually 7-8 couples were married at a time on one *toba* so that once invited relatives and guests could attend all the marriages. They expressed it: "*Pahlan mahina shadi chaldi hae hunn ten char denhen*" In the past, marriage lasted for months.

Decrease in the duration of marriage function shows that prolonged stay was due to non-availability of conveyance facilities whereas improved transportation sources have changed this trend. It is also evident that social bonds are getting weaker everywhere, no matter it is nomadic and tribal society. Since now opportunities for interaction with the people from settled areas have increased where marriage is function for hours not even days, so it is also motivation for reducing duration of marriage celebrations.

When asked the respondents about arrangements made for guests attending marriage ceremony, respondents from greater Cholistan told that they served them with meat and locally prepared sweet dishes. Special guests were served with mutton whereas common guests were served with beef. Two respondents told that those who did not afford offering mutton, just served all the guests with beef. Participation of *peer* (spiritual leader)

in marriage was considered a prestige and a sort of divine blessing. Very special arrangements were made for stay and food of the *peer*.

Although serving guests on marriage with mutton is out of reach for a common man in settled Punjab, but since economy of Cholistan is informal and dependent on livestock, every household has a herd, so slaughtering goat, sheep and cow was easy for them and guests were served with these dishes. High respect for *peer*, irrespective of his personal integrity and level of acting upon religious teachings, shows that there is poor education and level of awareness. There is decreased level of respect and social influence of *peer* in lesser Cholistan which reveals that education and increased level of awareness creates a sense of analysing things.

Although in greater Cholistan, arrangements on marriage function are traditional ones, but in lesser Cholistan, now tents are installed for protection of guests attending marriage from scorching heat of the desert. Two of the respondents told that now some people arranged for lighting and generator for supply of power along with tents. Some people also make such arrangements in greater part. They described it: "*Hun Rohi wich vee koi koi daryaan tey laitu lawanda hann*" Now in Cholistan, few people arrange tent and lighting.

Change in arrangements on marriage in the lesser Cholistan highlights that change in socio economic conditions has effects on all walks of life and is reflected in all the activities. Since in lesser Cholistan, income level of the people has increased and they have better level of social awareness due to access to roads and conveyance facilities, so it is reflected in the arrangements of marriage.

When respondents were asked about consideration of couple match at the time of marriage decision making, they told that they just considered men and women whereas other factors like age, education, financial status and personal characteristics were not given

any importance. They narrated it: *“Dhee da watta dhee ghindy sey beha kuj kaen nhi”* Daughter is exchanged with daughter; we consider none of any other factors.

Non consideration for couple match before marriage discloses poor level of matrimonial relationship between life partners. In many cases, they have to lead married life with so many compromises which weakens mutual relations. In this practice, women were more sufferers because of their already poor social status in nomadic life style. They cannot raise any voice against their husband and in-laws, resultantly their life is full of miseries and deprivations. It also indicates hold of elderly in the social life of adults and children whose voice and rights are suppressed in the tradition driven society of Cholistan. A female is more considered a commodity for exchange than a human being.

When respondents were asked about status of women in post marriage life they told that in Cholistan an ideal married women was one who remained obedient and self-sacrificing without demanding her individual rights and expressing her reservations over any personal and domestic matter. A married woman was supposed to stay at husband home in any case. There is a popular saying in local language which indicates post marriage life of women: *“Dhee behen apny ghar sohni lagdi ay”* Daughters and sisters should stay at their husband’s home in any case.

Post marriage life of women is sort of soft imprisonment as they have to be at husband home in any case except visiting her parental home with prior permission of in laws. Women have no say in the domestic decision making until reaching a certain age and becoming grandmother. Researcher came to know that newly married woman is discriminated in many aspects because she is given secondary importance. In many cases, she is given poor part of the food cooked at home. Being resident of desert area, they do not have any outlet for catharsis and keep suffering socio economic and psychological problems.

When respondents were asked about dowry related practices in Cholistan, they told that it was centuries old tradition in Cholistan. Parents gave maximum dowry according to their financial status. It was parental effort to support daughter after her marriage. They gave ornaments, clothes, bedstead and crockery. Respondents from lesser Cholistan told that now nature of dowry was changing and some new items were replacing previous ones. Now tin trunks and some basic furniture was included in dowry. Much quantity of dowry was considered a symbol of higher status of bride at her parental home. From groom's family, gift for only bride showed their more concern with bride than her family members. "*Ghot aaly zaal wasty zaver kapry ghin ke andy ne*" Groom's family brings clothes and jewelry for bride.

It is apparent from dowry practice that parents have love and care for daughters, although girls are deprived from right of their inherited property but yet paternal family compensates it within their financial affordability. Giving commonly needed household items as dowry shows that parents want their daughters better facilitated at in laws home.

Regarding quantity of dowry, irrespective of financial status, it was best efforts of parents to give maximum and best within their access. They said: "*Maa peyo dheer kon jtina thee saky otna dena haan*" Parents gave dower to their daughters as they can afford.

Respondents from both parts of Cholistan told that there were specific ornaments and dresses which reflect the marital status of women. When asked about reason of symbolic reflection of marital status of women, they told that women were supposed to internalize that marriage has transferred her life into another phase. There was no such symbolic identity showing marital status of men. Bangles and some other specific ornaments that a woman worn on her marriage day were put off in case of husband's death. They said: "*Shadi tey kary pa gidhao tey bandy dey marany tey laha ditta*" Bangles worn on marriage and are removed after death of husband.

When asked about particular dress that showed marital status of women. Some respondents of greater Cholistan told that they were not allowed to put on *shalwar* (baggy type trouser with narrow ending) after marriage. After marriage, she has to wear traditional dress consisting on *ghaghra*. They said: “*Shadi tu baad shalwaran naie pawandy*” Women do not wear trouser after marriage.

In Hindus, there was also culture of reflecting marital status through jewelry and dress. One respondent said: “*Shadyaan bajh kara pandy heen ty sindor landy aan*” After marriage, women wear specific bangles and put *Sindur* (red colour cosmetic powder applied on parting of hairs). This was sign of pitiable status of woman in Cholistan. With the death of husband, she had to show her widowhood. A widow was perceived misfortune and mostly people avoided her presence on occasions like marriage and child birth. Social discrimination coupled with poverty made the life of widows miserable and pathetic.

Dress colours for women have been given certain subjective meaning in the Cholistan for reflection of their marital status. This practice reveals that women have secondary or tertiary social position in the Cholistan. Throughout her life, a woman is occupied by some or the other tradition which deteriorates her living and life. This is indication of over sensitization of women’s marital status in Cholistan. Different dress colours have some meaning for women but meaningless for men which reflects deep rooted gender discrimination and tradition bound life of women in Cholistan. With lost of her life partner, she also loses colours from life which are thought be very important for women of Cholistan.

When respondents were asked about behaviour of in-laws forty years back, they told that after marriage woman was supposed to obey all the restrictions and traditions of in-laws family and never demand anything. A married woman had no right to demand and express her wants which were not according to family traditions. One respondent told that

still she is doing same but now some women spoke in some matters. This reactive behaviour was even disliked by elderly women as they called it as *chir chir* (murmuring). In Cholistan they expected submissiveness from women and disliked their interference. This sentence is likely to be proverb in Cholistan: "*Zallan kon apny kum naal kam rakhna chahee da ay*" Women should mind their own business.

Women in Cholistan perform many duties at their in-laws home, from routine domestic chores to taking care for livestock but she is not supposed to say anything in decision making or spending of household income. It shows that a woman, in the post marriage life, has to spend her physical energies in performing assigned duties but she is not allowed to participate in decision making as a part of family for a long time.

When asked about divorce, respondents told that in past, there was not any such happening. In case of conflict between husband and wife, family and tribe members made reconciliation. Women themselves did not like to be divorces despite suffering from worse conditions. They told that marriages in Cholistan were arranged on exchange basis within family and caste which was one of hindrance in divorce. If one couple has divorced, then other would have to surely do the same. So two families and especially the elder ones interfered which always resulted in reconciliation and compromises between married couple. They expressed it: "*Jay larai ho waderyan sulaha kara dendy henn*" In case of conflict between husband and wife, elders intervene and reconcile.

Least ratio of divorce in Cholistan has two aspects. First, just like commonly found in nomadic and tribal families, there is strong social bond among the nomads of Cholistan. It is positive social practice that strengthens and saves family structure and increases social cohesion. Second, individual freedom is suppressed and once married, both the life partners have to compromise everything that they do not like in each other. Many times, it results into personal dissatisfaction and mental disturbance.

But some respondents from lesser Cholistan told that now there happened too few divorces. They said: "*Pahly talaq kaen nhi theedni henn, honn kity koi thee veiandi ay*: In the past, there was no concept of divorce, but now some cases happened.

Researcher came to know that currently there were few cases of divorce, which is indication of social change in the Cholistan area. As a result of increased awareness, now personal likings and disliking are given some importance in the life of an individual. Likewise, increased level of social awareness strengthens self of the individual whereas family and other social factors become weaker.

Hindu respondents told proudly that they were deadly loyal with husband and did not get divorce or went for second marriage after their widowhood. Among the Hindus, men were also not socially permitted to divorce. If spouse of women died, she was not supposed to marry throughout the life. They said: "*Asan talaq lyndy ann na dosri shadi krendy aan*" We never divorce or re-marry.

Respondents told that in Cholistan there exists a mind-set that in any case, married women best suits at her in-laws home. There was perception that divorced happened when a woman failed to satisfy her husband and in-laws. A successful woman was one who, despite all the sufferings, never broke marriage. Socially, divorce is considered an immoral act and divorcee is disliked. Respondents further told divorce ratio is relatively higher in those women who belong from out of Cholistan. In case of divorce, sometimes they marry with brother in law or any other close relative of husband. There is common perception that if a woman asks for divorce, it is insult for her husband, it is why first wife is also not divorced in case of re- marriage. Similarly, a woman is not expected to take care of herself after being widow, they said: "*Banda mar wany ety ghar walyan bandyaan thandyaan kaen nhi*" After death of husband, women did not maintain themselves.

Respondents told that after death of husband, it is disliked if a widow maintained herself. Socially, she is criticized with the understanding that she has not observed and taken deep grief of her husband's death. Widows are supposed to wear light coloured clothes as symbol of grief of husband's death. Young widow was considered more misfortune. Women explained that in any ceremony, participation of widow is avoided. Widow women essentially remove ornaments on the day of her husband's death. These customs realize a woman that her peaceful and smooth life is conditioned with the life of husband.

Some respondents told that Muslin widow did re-marry in few cases, mostly with her brother-in-law. Researcher observed that women are discriminated in all walks of life; there is typical patriarchal mind-set about the roles and responsibilities of women. Majority of men think that first and foremost purpose of creation of women is getting married and procreation. After reaching a certain level of age, girls are considered social and financial burden on parental family. There is social pressure from close relatives and elderly of the tribe for marrying a girl as soon as possible. Although females participate in economic activities such as taking care of livestock and helping in agriculture, but their role and participation was not recognised, it would not be out of place to say that existence of women was taken for granted by the virtue of their inferior social status.

Expressions of respondents reflect that polygamy is not common in Cholistan. It is because only monogamy is socially accepted. If any person was childless, then he was considered rightful for second marriage. If a man did not have male child, he could also go for second marriage which is not considered socially ill. On the other hand, a childless woman was just thought as misfortune. There was no concept that a woman could desire for second marriage for having children or male child. It is said about such women:

“Jey baal na theway tay zaal di apni qismat” If a woman did not have children, it is all about her luck. This is extreme of gender biasness against women, anything bad happening to them is said to be her misfortune whereas in case of men, there are alternatives and compensations, so they can take decisions for fulfilment of their wants and wishes.

7.2 Part-II: Family

“Jaman tun ghin ke marn taeen khandan ee subho loran pori karda ay” It

is family which fulfils all needs of individual-from birth till death.

“Jo kujh sikhna ay gharon sikna ay” Everything is learnt from home.

“Jahri boldi ay oh ee khaly khandi ay” A woman, who will speak in front of men, will be beaten.

“Gahr aaly ee kheyal rakhna beha kon kresi” Its only family members who take care, otherwise who else will take care?

These were some of the responses about family as an institution and its functions in Cholistan. In the absence of institutional services, importance of family has increased manyfolds in the Cholistan. A family usually consist of three generations and performs several important functions for survival of an individual. There is patriarchal family system in the Cholistan; therefore, head of the family is father or elderly male who gets all the rights of family property. Mostly, father or an elderly man in the family is authority in decision making about livestock selling and slathering, accepting and rejecting marriage proposals, migrating from one *toba* to another and maintaining social relationships. Family members in Cholistan are responsible for transfer of culture from one generation to the next.

An elderly woman, who is mostly mother or grandmother, has special position and honour in the family. She supervises all the women for the domestic chores such preparation and distribution of food, care of livestock and preparation of dairy products.

All the females are supposed to obey elderly woman whereas she is under control of her husband. As a family member, women have no say in important decision making. They significantly participate in all the family tasks but she does not have her rights as an individual.

When respondents were asked about family system in greater Cholistan, they told that from past till date, they lived with joint and extended family system. All the family members participated jointly in all the activities and lived in one *ghopa*. They described: “*Assan kahndaan dy nal rahny aan*” We live along with family members.

Researcher observed that in desert, living all alone was not possible due to geographic and climatic conditions. Here survival depends upon living together and helping each other in the time of need. So adoption of joint family system is, both tradition and need, of the people in the Cholistan. Joint and extended family system is massively practiced in greater Cholistan whereas in lesser Cholistan, nuclear family system is also getting trend. Respondent explained that in lesser Cholistan, households still live under joint family system but extended family system has been given up. Some respondents told that they are living with nuclear family, one respondent expressed: “*Hun koi koi kaly vee rahnda henn*” Fewer families were living under nuclear family system.

Adoption and acceptance of nuclear system in the lesser Cholistan is evidence of social change happening in the area due to increase in the economic activities and social awareness. Since nuclear family system gives more personal freedom and rights to the family members, so it is getting place and reflecting that now people realize their right for personal freedom. Generally, nuclear family system is adopted when there is insurance on the part of the family members that they could survive. Prevalence of this family system also shows that there are economic opportunities in the area on which family could survive.

When asked the respondents about strength of intra family relationships, they told that in the past, they had strong mutual bond among the family members. Everybody was obedient to the head of the family. If one family member was facing any trouble it was shared by whole family. They lived together, shared kitchen, took food jointly, they said: *“Sary gee iko ja hondy si khushi ghami daa kath si”* In the past, we all lived at one place and shared feelings of happiness and sorrow.

Respondents from lesser Cholistan told that now bonds within family were getting weaker and there was more individualism as compared to the past. Now there were more joint families than extended ones. They told that living style has changed and now mutual dependence and intimacy has decreased in the family. Now decision making lied within family rather than clan in the past. One of the respondents told that now newly married couples liked to live in nuclear family and there was decrease in family unity, respondent expressed as: *“Hun pahly wali gal ko,har koi apo apa ey”* Now previous trend is dying, everybody is independent.

Bond within family is dependent on love, care and obedience for the rest of the family members. With the beginning of nuclear family system, all these passions become weaker and concentration is given to life partner and children instead of all the relatives living in joint family. Since there are no economic activities except livestock and certain handicrafts in greater Cholistan, therefore individuals are more dependent on family and live together in joint form family type, whereas in lesser Cholistan, little economic independence has given space to emergence of nuclear family system.

When asked about level and nature of dependency on the family, they told that from past till present, family has been only source that fulfilled all the needs of individual i-e psychological, social, economic and biological. They told that food and shelter of a child was responsibility of family. Just like past till date, family is fulfilling all the

individual needs within available resources. If anyone wanted to live independently, only then responsibility is shifted, as few cases were reported. Respondents in lesser Cholistan expressed this situation: "*Kahndan hee khawann pewann krenda ay, koi apo anj thewway taan ohdi marzi*" Family was providing for eating and drinking, yet if someone wanted to live independently. It was left to their will. Respondents described functions of family in these word: "*Jaman tun ghin ke marn taeen khandan ee subho loran pori karenda ay*" From birth to death, its family which fulfills all the needs of an individual

As reported by the respondents, family performs variety of functions for an individual which shows importance of family as an institution for an individual. Family is only source of support in the Cholistan where there is no institutional service for an individual. Individual has no option except to be part of family throughout life for survival in the hostile environment of the desert.

When respondents were asked about role of family in social identity, they told that social recognition was caste based. Whenever two strangers met, they inquire after about the caste of each other and further interaction was driven by family and caste of the persons. Women were also recognized through family and caste of their either father or husband. They introduced themselves as daughter, wife or daughter-in-law of respective family. Women are identified like this: "*Dahyan di nou ay*" She is daughter in-law of *Daha* family. "*Ray di dheer ay*" She is daughter of *Rai*.

Researcher observed that family and caste is given importance in all type of social gatherings such as in marriage ceremony, women from well off families and castes were given special prestige and preference. They were offered special sitting place and food. They talked like this: "*Numberdar di ghar walyan ny*" She is from family of *numberdar*.

During mutual conversation and meetings, Women introduce themselves with the family and caste name. They seldom ask each other's name, many respondents told that

introduction of the family is enough for them. Preference of caste in the social gathering reflects that caste system has central importance in the Cholistan. Due to lack of education and awareness, personal characteristics and integrity is ignored whereas caste is given importance.

When respondents were asked about role of family in socialization of kids, they told that family was the only source of bringing up and making them learn survival skills in the harsh and hot environment of Cholistan. In the absence of other socialization agents like education and media, elder members of the family trained the younger one about historical happenings and culture of the area. They said: "*Jo kujh sikhya ay gharon sikna ay*" We have learnt everything from family.

Researcher observed that people living in Cholistan have poor social skills for maintaining inter action and surviving out of Cholistan. It is because socialization is solely dependent on family and children do not get diverse exposure. Knowledge and experience of the parents and family members is transferred to the children whereas other agents of socialization are not present.

When asked about role of women as family member in socialization of children, they told that women have significant role in upbringing the children. In nomadic society, men were mostly out of home; therefore responsibility of socializing children was majorly on women. All the social learning of girls was entirely through mother and other elderly women in the family, they said: "*Wadyan reat rawaj sikhanyan ney*" Elderly women taught norms and culture to the children.

Some respondents in lesser Cholistan told that now there were other agents of socialization such as formal education institutions. Now responsibility of family and especially women was keeping their children stick to their nomadic cultural values has increased. Elderly family members expressed their fear about deviation of younger ones

from nomadic culture in these words: “*Jehra parh javwaey ya abadi jawey tey oh onhan dey chalann wakhry thee waindy ney*” Those who got education and visited settled area, tend to follow their culture.

Researcher observed that men in Cholistan consider them least responsible for socializing their children, so women have to take this responsibility. It is perception on the part of men that socialization of children is sole responsibility of women and they have to nothing to do with bringing up children. With the passage of time, Cholistani women try to internalize nomadic culture to their children who go for formal education in the formal institutions. Hence they protect and transfer culture to the next generation when seemingly it is under threat.

When asked about role of family in helping its member in case of health problems, they told family members arranged amulet and home based remedies and all the needed arrangements in the past and presently as well. When asked about role of women in health problem of family members, it came into knowledge that women played primary role in such situation. Men played active role in case of only there was serious illness and something was to be taken from settled areas. Their words were: “*Jey koi bemar ho jawey tey zalan dawai den dyan henn, mard apna kam kredny ney*” When someone fell ill, women gave medicines and men did their routine job.

In the absence of health facilities from public or private sector in the Cholistan, roles and responsibilities of women has increased because they have to take care and provide medicines to the ill family member(s). This shows central role of women in all aspects of life in Cholistan, but there is little recognition by men who think that women have to do all this by the virtue of being woman.

Respondents told that family members provide security and protection to its members in the Cholistan. Although there are only too few crimes but yet every individual

feel secured and protected being part of family. When asked about role of family in provision of recreation, respondents told that family provides possible recreational opportunities to its members. Different local games and get-together are arranged by family. Women played important role in recreation of females such as they prepare dolls for young girls and stitch their dresses. They sing songs in the marriage ceremony for recreation of younger females. Despite limited resources and opportunities, family members and especially women try to provide recreation to individual members of the family. In the greater Cholistan, due to geographical conditions, police service is not available for the residents, so security of the individual members is also responsibility of the family.

When asked respondents about role of family in arranging marriage of its members, it was told that family was responsible for selection and arrangements of marriage of its all members. Family provided financial resources for marriage, they expressed in this way: *“Shadi dey sary kam khandan dey loki kr dy ney”* All the activities of marriage were arranged by family.

On the one hand, family takes care of the members but on the other hand, authority of family is also absolute. Once elderly member take any decision, individuals are not supposed to disobey in any case. Family member exert social pressure on the individual for implementation of the decisions. Under these conditions, individual wisdom and perception is considered inferior to the collective wisdom, that is why individual are bound to sacrifice their wishes and wants in front of elders. Elders think that youngsters are inexperienced and their decisions are immature. They say like it: *“Jehra faisla wadyan kar ghidda, koi naa ni kar sakda”* No one can be deviant from the decision made by elders.

When asked about hierarchy of power within family and role of different members, participants of the research told that father has one of the important roles because he

assigns responsibilities to all members and represents family in social gatherings such as marriage and death. Some respondents told that presently father alone has started taking decision in lesser Cholistan without seeking consent of close relatives. Here, in some cases, mother too has some role in decision making but this is just limited to expression of opinion whereas final decision still lies with the father. Participation of wife in the decision making and ignoring opinion seeking of close relatives highlight a difference between both parts of Cholistan. Since there is some education in the lesser Cholistan and women have certain level of awareness about their rights, so they are being listened and also awareness decision making, although yet their social position is secondary one as compared to men due to male dominance.

When asked about role of grandmother in the family, they told that she is respected and she looks over different household activities. Her loves for grandchildren and teaching them norms and values of family and taribe are highly valued. They said: "*Waderyan baalan da pyar krednyan henn*" Grandmother loves a lot to grandchildren.

Grandmother takes care of children in busy hours of mother. Even in the case of greater Cholistan, she has a little say in decision making which reflects high respect for her. When there is conflict within family, she mostly reconciles and cools down family members by using her social position. In the household celebrations, she makes decisions about arrangements and represents family where women representation is compulsory. Her role is to advise granddaughters and daughter-in-law but some respondents from lesser Cholistan told that now kids made fun of her, they stated: "*Aj kal dy bal mery tey khildy henn*" Now children laugh at me. (Respondent herself was grandmother)

In nomadic culture of Cholistan, elderly women, be mother or grandmothers are respected by all the family members. They are exempted from various cultural restrictions due to their old age and sometimes their opinion in decision making is given importance.

Making fun of them by youngster shows generation gap and social change. Due to interaction with settled areas, in some cases, children do not listen them and criticize their wisdom and life style.

When respondent were solicited about role of mother in the family, they told that from past to the present, mother has multidimensional role such as taking care of children, cooking food for all the family members and fetching water. Mother gives training to her daughter(s) and daughter(s)-in-law. Few respondents in lesser Cholistan told that she has to manage all the needs of school going children. She is also responsible for implementation of decisions of father or head of the family, respondents expressed in these words: "*Baalan da kheyal krendia ey tay sub da khawnn peewan naly pani vee bharendyan ney*" She (mother) takes care of children, cooks food and fetches water.

Multifaceted role of mother is important for running day to day domestic affairs. Although she is not appreciated by men and her role is taken for granted. This is reflection of discrimination on gender basis and unawareness on the part of mother about her rights.

When explored about role of daughter as family member in Cholistan, respondents told that in the past and till present, role of daughter is just to follow instructions of her elders (father, uncle (s) and brother (s)). She is supposed to do household chores with her mother. Traditionally, daughters never speak about any decision made by elders. Although it is very rare but disobedience by a daughter to the decisions made, earns annoyance of male members. They proudly said: "*Dheyaan kon jo akho mann ghindyan henn bur bur kaeen naie karyndyan*" Our daughters follow, whatever we ask them, they never speak against it.

Respondents told that in Cholistan daughters were considered a symbol of family honour and with any of her disgraceful act, family would lose respect for ever. So her obedience was deemed more important. Generally, she is respected in the family because

she has to leave her parental home sooner or later. In case of any moral weakness in her character, she is treated harshly and she faces corporal punishment. When it was asked about beating daughters, respondents wished that: *“Oh wela na aye jey dhi marni py”* May Allah never bring such time when it is inevitable to beat a daughter.

Respondents told that daughters are supposed to be silent and sit aside when male members are present at home. They seldom talk to their father. Females do not sit equal to their brother and prefer to sit at some lower place. *“Bhara jithy ban uthy na betha taly bato”* We sit at some lower place than brother (s). They talk to their brothers but with serious attitude. They have special representation in ceremonies of marriage of their brother and get gifts from them. At present especially in lesser Cholistan, few sit equal to their brother(s) but maintain distance while few brothers also make fun with their sisters.

Researcher observed that daughters are given special respect but it is conditional with their blind obedience and sacrificing personal wants and wishes. As a token of respect, daughters and sister even do not sit equal to their father and brother. Her personal freedom is limited to eating and drinking what so ever is available at home. She has to observe cultural restrictions all the time as she is said to be carrier of honour of the family. In the name of respect, she has to suppress her feelings even for father and brother (s) as she talks very little to them.

When asked about role and status of daughter in law, respondents told she was to fulfil multiple responsibilities and instructions given to her. In case she was disobedient, bodily punishment was supposed as a right act, they said: *“Jehri boldi ay oh ee khaly khandi ay”* A wife who argues in front of her husband, is beaten. They thought that physical violence is justified in case of disobedience of women.

Respondents told that a woman, after being wife is also not free to express freely with her husband. Even after several years of marriage, if husband and wife do

conversation in front of elders, they are said to be immodest. The story do not end here they are also criticized for not caring about feelings of un-married girls at home. They said: "*Wadyan di hya karydain ny ty gal naie karain dy*" Husband and wife do not talk in the presence of elders as a token of modesty.

Life of a woman in Cholistan is governed by nomadic traditions in Cholistan. In both cases, be married or bachelor, there is one or other cultural practice that makes her bound and restricts her freedom suppressing her rights as a human being. After marriage, in some families woman covers her face frommen at n-law family and in few cases even from her husband when there is any body around. Cholistanis thought modesty as pride of women, they said as: "*Pahly aurtan bohate hya karyndyan hein*" In the past, women were very modest.

At present, conversation between husband and wife in the presence of elders is acceptable in lesser Cholistan. It is social change with the passage of time but it is criticised by the elder members of the family that women were more modest in the past but now they do not care for our presence and keep talking to their husband. This is one form of suppression and violation of individual freedom and rights when conversation between husband and wife is considered immodest act. It is matter of great fun if a husband listens to his wife and favours her openly.

When asked about role of brother in the family, respondent told that in past, brothers lived together and helped one another through thick and thin. They lived very close to each other displaying unity. Father and elder brother were much respected members in the family and elder brother fulfil all responsibilities. But presently this relationship is getting weaker, their response was: "*Hun bharawan wich pahly wala pya naie rehya*" Now brother did not live with same love which was in past.

This shows that family bond is getting weaker with the passage of time and traditional love and care is decreasing among family members due to weakening of family bonds.

7.3 Part-III: Religion

“Namzan rozy koi koi janda ay” Few people knows about prayers and fasting

“Peer da hath hoye tey subhon khyraan ney” Everything will be fine if there would be favour and kindness of *peer*.

“Etyttey oh tey ohndi dhee Quran pak parh ghindyaan henn” Here only that woman (name being not written for hiding personal identity of respondent) and her daughter can recite holy Quran.

“Chanan peer tey mannat maan ghino taan moeadaan poryaan thee waindyaan ney” We vow on shrine of *Chanan peer* and our problems gert solved.

These were some of the responses when asked about religion and practice of religious teachings in the Cholistan. With the passage of time, there occurred many changes in the religious thoughts and understanding of the people in Cholistan. Forty years back, very few people were aware about religious obligations but now religious education is given little importance which has resulted in increased awareness. Cholistani women are least aware about religion and its obligations due to lack of direct opportunities for learning religion. Awareness and practice of religious teaching vary in both parts of Cholistan due to difference in level of social awareness. As a result of increased awareness, religious tolerance has increased between Muslims and Hindus who are living together in the area from centuries. People of Cholistan have poor knowledge of religion, which is why several superstitions are thought to be part of religion. Therefore, usage of amulets and unshakeable belief in *peer* (spiritual leader) as religious authority is found everywhere in Cholistan area.

In the previous chapters, it has been discussed that in Cholistan, grip of religion on the people is weak and very few people actually act upon religious teachings with letter and spirit. Due to lack of knowledge, concept of religion is confined to few concepts, customs and superstitions like worship of the *peer*.

In Cholistan, religion is thought to be a hereditary characteristic because getting born in Muslim or Hindu family is considered enough for becoming follower of that particular religion. Their pride is to be called as Muslim or Hindu. Religious celebrations are superficial such as *Eid ul Fitar* is celebrated but no one observes fasting in the desert. *Eid ul Azha* is celebrated with happiness because it is easy for them to slaughter animals. Women in Cholistan have very poor knowledge and awareness reason being no direct access to any source of knowledge. When they were asked about fulfilment of religious obligations, they said: "*Namzan rozy koi koi janenda ay saadyan*" Few of women know how to offer prayers and observe fasting.

Lack of authentic knowledge on the part of people is due to absence of reliable sources of religious education such as *Madrasa* or mosque. Their religious knowledge is dependent on hearsay from fellow beings and *peer*. In the life-threatening environment of Cholistan, survival is first and foremost concern of people, therefore, religion is not given as much preference as in settled areas and towns. In the absence of formal education and awareness through other sources such as electronic and print media, there is poor practice of religion in the Cholistan. That is why worship and prayers revolve around *peer* and shrines. In addition, as part of religious belief, people make vows on the shrines and sacrifice cows, goats and sheep upon fulfilment.

Women's knowledge on religion and practical learning is dependent on their male members. They learn about religion from father, husband and son in informal way that is why very few Muslim women could recite Holy Quran and offer prayers.

An overwhelming majority of respondents were Muslims. Either Hindu or Muslim, both feel proud of their religion and tell their religious identity with pride. They said like this: “*Asan Musalman haan, Hindu Sindh wich henn*” We are Muslims, Hindus live in Sindh.

They are right in saying that Hindus live in Sindh because the *Thar* desert is an extension of the Cholistan. There is notable population of Hindus, so people in Cholistan exclude them by saying that live away from here. This indicates a sense of „we feeling“ on religious basis, despite the fact that there is very little knowledge about religious teachings but they maintain distinction between them and followers of other religions.

Most of the respondents (both Hindu and Muslims) told, forty years back, they and their parents were aware about religion of each other. Although there live only Muslims and Hindus in the Cholistan, but some people are also aware about Christianity. Christianity is now being preached by the Christian missionaries in the area. A Hindu family showed a copy of the Bible to the researcher which was given by missionaries.

Respondents from greater Cholistan told that forty years back, they did not know how to perform daily prayers and funeral prayer for the dead. It was because they themselves did not know the “*rights de passage*” nor someone knowledgeable was available in the Cholistan. Among the men, there was little awareness about their religion practices like offerings daily prayers, recitation of the Holy Quran and fasting in the month of *Ramadan*.

In case of lesser Cholistan, respondents told that forty years back, very few people were aware about how to perform basic religious duties but now there is change in this situation. As a result of better sources of communication, now many people have awareness about religious beliefs and how to perform them. “*Hun mazhab bare zyada pata ay*” Now people know more about religion.

Better understanding of religion in the lesser Cholistan shows that with the increased education awareness, understanding about religious has also increased. Opportunities of interaction with people from settled areas, establishment of formal schools and transportation facilities has contributed for rise in awareness on religion, that is why now people have some knowhow of the religion in the lesser but greater Cholistan is still lagging behind due to lacking these facilities. Most of the respondents told that men have more awareness about religion and its practices whereas women mostly follow religion as presented to them by men, they said: “*Bandy zyada jand hin mazhab dy bary, assan tu unaan kon mann dey aan*” Men know more about religion, we follow their underrating.

Present respondents were aware about observing *Ramazan* and performing *Hajj*. Many respondents of greater Cholistan told that their forefathers were not even aware about fasting as a religious obligation. In greater Cholistan, fasting was not observed in the past, but at present, very few people observe fasting when it comes in winter season. Men observe more fasting than women. Respondents stated it in these words: “*Jawan Ramzan dy kujh dinan wich roza rikhyndy henn*” Mostly men observe fasting for few days of *Ramadan*.

When asked about payment of *Zakat*, respondents in greater Cholistan told neither in the past nor presently, they are aware that *Zakat* is compulsory financial obligation on those having a specified amount of wealth. Currently in lesser Cholistan, very few respondents told that they have just heard about *Zakat* but none of them ever paid because of unawareness about application of *Zakat* as religious tax on animals like goats, sheep, cows, camels. Some respondents of lesser Cholistan told that they were aware of *Zakat*, one of them told that they also paid it partially. Most of them believed in alms giving. They explained the reason for alm giving “*Abadi dy lokan di dekha dakhi karendy han*” We

learned that from people of settled areas. Similarly, there is no religious sectarianism as only very few respondents of lesser Cholistan told that they are aware about presence of different sects in Muslims but mostly men do not have such kind of knowledge. They said: "*Asan lokan ki enhaan galan da nai pata*" We people did not know such things like sects.

Islam has five pillars and Muslims not only need to know what they are but also have to firm believe in them, but in case of Cholistan, some people even do not know about them such as *Salaat* (prayer), *Zakat* and *Hajj* (pilgrimage). Majority of people in Cholistan are Muslims only by title, they do not have minimum knowledge about teachings and obligatory practices in Islam. It is evident that living conditions and religion are directly related, since primary concern of people living in Cholistan is survival in the hostile environment, which is why learning religious practices go at back foot.

Hindu respondents in lesser Cholistan told that they were also aware about their religious practices in past. Especially, they were aware of their differences in beliefs and practices with Muslims. "*Sady ty Muslmanan da faraq pata ay ty wadyan non wi pata aie*" We and our forefather were aware of differences with Muslims.

When respondents in greater Cholistan were asked about performance of religious obligations, they told forty years back, they did not know even about reading holy Quran, offering prayer and observing fasts which are very common religious obligations. At that time, very few could recite Quran and hardly any one observed fasting and offered prayers. They added more on it: "*Wadyan chi dhair bandyan wichon koi hik do banda namaz roza karenda henn tey hajj tey jandey si*" Among our elders, hardly one or two persons offered prayers, observe fasting and rarely someone went for *Hajj*.

In the past, women in the Cholistan were not sent for performing *Hajj*, because when a family had financial power for performing *Hajj*, men preferred them for this sacred deed. It shows priority was always given to men whereas women were at second preference. They

said: “*Bandy haj karan wahndy nain*“ Men go for performing *Hajj*. Respondents from greater Cholistan told that now some people know how to offer prayer and recite Quran, these obligations are performed more by men as compared to women. They said: “*Sady bandy koi koi namaz roza karen dy han tay zallen dahdhian ghat*” Some men offer prayer and observe fasting but very few women do it.

In Cholistan, although only few could afford expenses of performing *Hajj* but mostly people want to go for it despite lack of resources, many Muslim respondents said it wishfully that they want to perform pilgrimage at least once. Now few women went to perform pilgrimage, after returning, they are called *Hajan*. (a female who has performed pilgrimage). “*Kujh zaalen haj karan wahndyan henn*” At present, too few women also go to perform pilgrimage.

During field work, the researcher observed that almost every *toba* or temporary settlement had a mosque. Mostly these mosques were mud-made with thatched roof. In greater Cholistan, mosques were mostly made of refined Cholistani clay which served as cement. At some places, mosques were just in the form of paved platform with a sign of *Qibla* direction. Mosques were built through mutual financial contribution of local people. Sometime a place was symbolically specified for mosque. In greater Cholistan, there was no trend of offering prayer in congregation in these mosques and there was deserted look. Key persons in greater Cholistan stated that trend of constructing mosques emerged in last 20 to 30 years. Their response was: “*Pahlan inyan maseetan kaen naie henn*” In the past, there was not such a large number of mosques in Cholistan.

In lesser Cholistan, researcher observed that there are also few mosques constructed with fire bricks and cement where collective prayers are offered.

View of Mosque in Cholistan



Source: Picture taken by author during data collection

Respondents told that women always offered prayers within homes. They said: *“Zalan naie jandyan masjid”* Women do not go to offer prayers in mosque.

Hindu respondents told that they were observing traditional worship patterns. In the past, there were few but relatively big worship places reason being people lived in the form of groups, so they needed huge worship place. At present, they live in scattered form and have small worship places (temples). When asked about role of religion in social life other than worshipping, majority of them shared that our elders made decisions in the light of customs not religions. They said that: *“Bandy mil ke feisla karenay han jahri gal kath wich paki thee wany, reet riwaj dy mutbiq”* Men make collective decision in line with existing customs and traditions.

When respondents were asked about any social restriction on them from male members in the name of religion, most of them told that forty years back there was not any such restriction on them. Currently, in lesser Cholistan too few women observe *pardah*(veil)

in public as a religious obligation. Women observe purdah or veil from outsider, not from own family members. As in lesser Cholistan, there is a bit alienation and exposure to outsiders, so some women hide their faces.

All the respondents endorsed that in the past, there were no so much religious formalities in their daily lives or it can be said that the grip of religion as social institution was weak. Simply, few rites were considered enough for religion like saying *Kalma Shahdat* was considered enough for *Nikkah* (wed lock at the time of solemnization of the marriage) but now it is realized that presence and sermon by a *Imam* was compulsory for marriage contract. Not only this, now *Nikkah* is registered in the office of marriage registrar nominated by the government. They said: "*Pehlon kalma par dey saan hunn molvi darj wi krenda ay*" In the past saying *kalma Shahdat* was enough but now prayer leader registers it.

Some respondents told that women who remained unmarried were called as *Hajan*. One such case was reported where such woman was sent for *Hajj* as a compensation for not being married. When it was explored about certain myths as a part of religious beliefs, respondents told that majority of them believed that supernatural creatures did exist and could harm or benefit. While a few respondents from lesser Cholistan told now this concept was on decline. They told that females were more superstitious than men. They said as: "*Zaleen dhair waham karyndyan hen*" Women are more superstitious.

Mostly respondents told that they took *taveez* (amulet) when they were facing any trouble in their routine life. Presently amulets are more easily available. It also came in observation that almost everybody in greater Cholistan had amulet around their neck irrespective of men, women and children. At present in lesser Cholistan this practice has little bit decreased and less number of amulets is used. Hindus also wore amulets. Respondents told that they used amulets because of fear of supernatural creatures, evil eye etc.

Amulet is a living sign of superstition and is believed as a panacea for all health problem, phobia, physical diseases and so on. Mostly, the amulets are wrapped in black or green piece of cloth and put around the neck or tied around the arm of young boys and men. Not only it is considered important for human beings, but also a solution for problems of animals like cow, bull, camels etc. If a camel or cow is ill, they put an amulet around their neck or tied to the horn of the cow. If a milking cow is not giving milk, an amulet is considered as a treatment for this. As a result of this situation many so called *peers* also pay visit to the area and give their written and printed amulets to the illiterate people making good money. For such *peers*, it is a sort of business.

Most of the respondents from both parts of Cholistan told that when they encountered any problem either a social or an economic one, they visited their *peer*. They shared the problem and requested the *peer* for pray as a solution for problem. A *peer* is given more respect than prayer leader. They spoke about it in this way: “*Asan apny peer kol wahndhy se oh kadhen wi sa ko khali hath nai bhajeda*” We went to spiritual leader, he never returned us empty handed. *Peers* also pay visit to the Cholistan.

Peers gave brown sugar, coloured threads (to be put around neck) and water after holy saying. People shared their every personal matter with their *peer*. They believed that their *peer* could solve their all problems. Respondent expressed it: “*Peer da hath hoye tey subhon khyraan henn*” If there is blessing of spiritual leader, everything will be fine. In the past *peer* was given lot of gifts like butterfat and animals. They said: “*Peer ayoo ghee ditii maal ditoo dhair saman nal bhajoo*”. When *peer* came, we gave him with lots of gifts such as animals and *ghee*.

In greater Cholistan, people were more superstitious than lesser Cholistan. There, both Muslims and Hindus believe that a groom could be harmed on the marriage day by supernatural creatures, so he kept a dagger with him during marriage days. Furthermore,

researcher observed that when anybody died inside a room, they did not brought the dead body out through the door but broke the back wall opposite to the door for this purpose. They told that by doing so, the soul of the dead person will not come again into the house which if comes, can be disastrous sometime in case dead person had any annoyance with any family member. Some respondents in lesser Cholistan did not believe in superstitions but they were little fearful about such harms.

Hindus were more superstitious about different days and attached many myths with braying of donkey. Donkeys are common in the deserts due to its use as a pack animal. It is believed that when a donkey produces hee-haw sound, a Satan is surely around. When asked that how they compensate for the wrong doings and if they were in trouble, Both Muslims and the Hindus told they visit the shrines of spiritual mentor like *Chanan pee* and ask beg for their favour. They said: "*Chanan peer noo lagy salam keeta tey peer ko dua keeti*" We go to the shine of *Chanan peer* and beg his favour.

Respondents told that in both parts of Cholistan, there is strong religious and spiritual affiliation with *Chanan Peer*. He is accepted as chief saint in desert area and many supernatural happenings are attributed towards him. They said: "*Chanan Peer bari karamtan aala aey*" *Chanan peer* has many miracles. Few respondents also told that they light up *Chragh* (mud made lamp) and wish for their desires on shrines. They said: "*Chanan Peer da deewa balneday sey tay mannat mangdy sey*" We light up lamp on the shrine of *Chanan peer* and made vows.

Respondents told that other popular religious personality was saint and poet Khawaja Ghulam Fareed. According to them, he is highly respected in whole of the desert. Many of his devotees memorized his poetry and sang it on social occasions but now this trend is declining. Respondents in lesser Cholistan told that currently many people were not familiar with his teachings and poetry. This was considered as male activity to sing poetry

of Khawaja Gulam Fareed. They mentioned about the poetry it as: “*Hun lokan ko pahlyan wala cha tey vehla koi nie*” Now people did not have time and interest in poetry of Khawaja unlike the past.

When asked about change in the status of *peers* over past forty years, all the respondents told that now this trend is declining gradually there was change in this practice. “*Hun peeran da pahly jah ahtram naie ay*” At present, people are giving less respect to the spiritual leaders. Now religious orientation was changing in lesser Cholistan religious orientation was changing. Currently, people are not so strict and passionate in following the instructions of a *peer*. In the lesser Cholistan, size and number of gifts for *peer* has decreased, they said: “*Pahlon dhair mal wichon kon peer kon dey de dendy sey*. In past, they had larger number of animals, so they could give easily to *peer*. Two respondents in lesser Cholistan told that they got worried on arrival of *peer* because he could take away any thing as gift. They said that *peer* paid visit when he needed something. They said: “*Peer ayoo ty ky pata ky shy ly wanjy*” *Peer* could take away anything on his visit.

Respondents from lesser Cholistan told due to reduction in herd size, trend of gifting animal to *peer* is also decreasing. Because when they had large number of dairy animals, it was easy for them to gift one animal from herd. With decrease in number of animals, it is not affordable for them to gift on animal on his every visit. Most of the *peer* live in settled areas and pay occasional visits to their devotees in the Cholistan. It is believed that *peer* has superior caste and his prayers are more acceptable by God. Few *peer* also gave some logical solution without having exact knowledge but devotees admitted their miraculous power.

Since awareness level and material resources were getting better as compared to past, so trend of blindly following spiritual leaders is gradually decreasing. Now people looked for alternate solutions. Pace of this change was slow because beliefs were internalized since many generations. Many people have immense respect for *peer* like one

respondent told that she respects her *peer* more than her husband. She said: “*Peer di izzat ziada kreni haan apny bandyn nalon*” I have more respect for *peer* than my husband.

Anyhow at some places situation was opposite to this, as two respondents from lesser Cholistan said: “*Hun-bandy naie man dy peran non mana karyny ney*” Now male forbid us to meet with *peer*, they have no belief in them.

When respondents were asked about religious celebrations, they told *Eid-ul-Azha* and *Eid-ul-Fitar* are celebrated. In the past, *Eid ulAzha* was celebrated with more passion and they could slaughter sheep, goats, cow and sometime camel. Presently, due to reduction in herd size, animal slaughtering is also decreasing in lesser Cholistan. They became happy and have proud if they could sacrifice animal on *Eid*.

Respondents in the greater Cholistan told that from past till day, special food is prepared on both *Eids* but did not offer prayer. But now some people offer *Eid* prayer in lesser Cholistan. Among women, only one had offered *Eid* prayer along with her daughters. Respondents from lesser Cholistan told that women cooked food on both *Eid* and only men offer prayer. On the eve of *Eid*, respondents told that they wore washed clothes whereas in lesser Cholistan, some respondents told that presently new clothes are purchased depending upon availability of money. Two of the respondents from lesser Cholistan told that in the past they did wear new clothes and bangles on *Eid*. At present, due to change in economic conditions, they seldom buy new clothes for *Eid* if they had money otherwise put on just washed clothes.

Respondents told other than two *Eids*, *Chanan peer Urs* (fair) is also a religious celebration since past. Respondents in greater Cholistan told that few people went to *urs* of *Chanan peer* in past whereas now many men attended it. There is also trend of women visits to *Chanan peer* for making vows. Majority of women attending the *Urs* were wishful for children especially sons. “*Zaleen balaan di mantan pari karn jandyahan henn*” Mostly

women went to make vow for children and especially sons. They further stated about change in this practice. "*Hun zalan zyada jandyan ny maily ty*" Unlike the past, currently more women go to *Urs*.

When asked about role of women on *Urs* in the past and presently, majority of the respondents told that they cook food for family members and visitors because devotees come from far flung areas for attending *Urs* It is just their charity service to please God and *Chanan peer*. When respondents were asked about freedom of performing religious obligations, Muslim respondents expressed that they have full freedom from past till present. But Hindu respondents told that they have to observe certain limitations for performing religious obligations. They said: "*Asan apni ibadat ghar tey andar kredny haan*" We worship inside our worship place.

They are aware about celebrations of Muslims but Muslims were not aware about religious celebrations of Hindus. Now tolerance level of Muslims has increased for them. They told presently their animals were allowed to drink water from *toba* but their women are not allowed to fetch water. In the past, in many cases Muslim women did pour water in the pitcher of Hindu women. They said: "*Muslamana di zalan pani nahi bharan dendy apny tobyan ton*" Muslims women do not let us fetch water from their *tobas*. Now mostly Hindus are living in lesser Cholistan where there are many water sources available.

When respondents were asked about ways of getting religious education, most of them told that in past there was no concept of getting religious education but presently if they found any source person who could recite Holy Quran, they like to make it learn to their children. Researcher observed that in greater Cholistan, one of respondents could recite Holy Quran and all women were mentioning her in this way: "*Oh tey ohndi dheer Quran pak parh ghindi ay*" She and her daughters can recite Holy Quran.

Respondents said forty years back in lesser Cholistan, too few people were available for teaching Holy Quran to girls but presently some *Imams* are available to impart their children religious education. From past, people believed that religious education is good for moral training of the girls. They said: “*Nikkyan kon Quran parhana change samjhea janda ay tan jey neik howan*” It is thought good to make learn holy Quran to girls so that they may become pious. In lesser Cholistan its emerging trend that people send their sons to *Madrassa* (religious seminaries for education) for religious education.

Researcher observed that females and especially elderly women were playing significant role in imparting religious educating their children. Prayer leaders and religious teachers were available only at too few places. In major parts of Cholistan, this important job is being carried out by women from history to date. At Bijnot (greater Cholistan) local people arranged one religious teacher from settled area. There, a very few respondents told that at present their daughters are learning Quran from an religious teacher. They said as: “*Molvi, Mulla ballan koo Quran parhana sikhanda ay*” Prayer leader teaches the Holy Quran to children.

For all respondents, just learning reading Quran recitation and offering prayer was considered enough as religious education. From past till date, elderly women in Hindus were source of teaching practices and dos and don’ts of their religion for young girls. There are hundreds of superstitions which can be seen daily lives of people in Cholistan. Some common superstitions are as below:

“*Marg aafsoss karn Itwar kon nhi*” Nobody goes for condolence on Sundays.

“*Budh ko lein dein nhi krenday*” They did not sell animals or jewelry and avoided any commercial transaction on Wednesdays.

“*Waindy koo pichoon awaz nhi deti waindi*” If any person was leaving for an important task out of the village they did not ask reason of his travel or call him from back.

“Jey raey da teil veteen wany taan changa samjhey wainda ay” If mustard oil flows down from a lamp they become happy and considered it as a good fortune.

“Kheer vateej wanjy taan bura samjhe waindy ay” Wastage of milk is a bad omen. They removed bangles and jewelry of widow on death of her husband. They did not celebrate three marriages in a single day especially of three brothers and sisters they thought that one of them will remain issueless.

“Asan lok niki badi koon manydain aan” We (Hindu) believed in good and bad signs.

At time of sunset (evening prayer) keeping room’s door was considered a bad sign. If black wasps came inside the room they thought that this was thirsty soul of any dead man and sprinkled water on that. If any man had married second time, it was believed that if he would die if got married third time. Functions of marriage, family and religion as social institutions quite are important for individual’s survival in Cholistan. Cholistani women have a significant role in these social institutions from past to date. With the increased awareness, literacy, education and usage of telecommunication and automobiles, roles and statuses of the women are changing with variation in in lesser and greater Cholistan.

8. Chapter-VIII: Data Analysis on Health, Education and Economy

This chapter consists of data analysis of three social institutions in Cholistan, part I discusses health as institution, part II presents analysis on education institution, last part contains data analysis of economy as institution.

8.1 Part I: Health

“Etha Roi wich kuj kaeen nhi milda, elaj keety bus sada Allah ee ay” Here in *Rohi* (Cholistan), nothing is available for treatment except Allah.

“Rohi wich Allah dey elaj henn” In *Rohi* Allah Himself does treatment of the ill ones.

“Kheer karh ke pi gidha, cha pi gidi teh dhop ich leit wany jey kuj thee wanjy” We take hot milk or tea and lay down in the sun for treatment of common health problems.

“Sady bandy dawa abadi ton ghin any nen jehrhi asan elaj kity cha ghidi” Our men bring medicine for all kinds of pains and temperature; we use them if and when needed.

Here are some of the views of respondents when they were asked about health facilities, problems and remedies adopted in the Cholistan. These responses portrayed picture of helplessness and deprivations of people in the Cholistan. Lack of health facilities has led them to be contended when suffering from health problems and believing in superstitions such as amulets and spiritual healings. Finding no formal health care services, Cholistani people use immediately available remedy which includes amulet and/or locally found shrub. In case of minor health problem, these people take hot milk, tea and some pain killing medicines which they buy from nearby towns when they visit for buying household necessities like sugar, pulses and floor etc.

Women in Cholistan living in patriarchal and nomadic society, have immense health problems with no formal health facilities available for relief. When a woman fell ill, her ailment is given little importance, that is why she is not taken to the doctor, maximum

concern shown by the men is just calling an elderly woman from surroundings who is considered wise and experienced for advising some curative measure.

When women were asked about available health facilities in case of illness, all the respondents in greater Cholistan told that there were no health facilities in the past. Therefore, four decades earlier, there was no concept of formal treatment in greater Cholistan. For accessing health facilities in settled areas, forty years ago, since only source of transportation from desert to the settled area were camels which are not suitable for carrying patients, therefore patients died in helplessness.

Respondents told that some change have taken place presently, since now in case of serious health problem, if luckily they get any vehicular conveyance, they take the patients to settled areas. But even in case of serious health problem, when there is need to carry patients from greater Cholistan to settled areas, conveyance available is the army (desert rangers) vehicles going from border areas to district headquarter. In addition, CDA and Army (Desert Rangers) arrange yearly few free medical camps in different areas of Cholistan.

When asked from respondents in lesser Cholistan, they told that there were no formal health facilities forty years ago but currently, some health centers have been established by CDA but there is poor service for the patients as staff employed at these health centers is hardly available for attending patients. Due to lack of education and needed training, Cholistanis themselves cannot serve at these health centers, so staff is recruited from settled areas who did not perform their duty properly due to lack of monitoring in the desert areas. At present, besides few health care centers, Lady Health Visitors (LHVs) also pay visit to the area on monthly basis for treatment of women related health problems. It is compulsory for women to seek permission for consulting/availing any facilities. Here is

detail of health centers established by CDA in lesser Cholistan whereas in greater Cholistan there was no permanent health facilities from past till date. Table. 5 Health Facilities in Cholistan

Name of the District	R.H.Cs.	B.H.U.s.	Dispensaries	Status
Bahawalpur	1	04	01	One BHU at MojGarh Non-functional
Bahawalnagar	0	01	01	Both Functional
Rahim Yar Khan	0	04	0	All Functional

Source: Cholistan Development Authority (2013)

The table shows that after establishment of the CDA, five health centers have been established in the district Bahawalpur including one Rural Health Center (RHC), four BHUs and one dispensary. One of the BHUs was non-functional since a long time which further decreases options of accessing any health facility for local people. In the District Bahawalnagar, there are only two health centers; one BHU and one dispensary, whereas in district Rahim Yar Khan, there are four BHUs in total. Overall, for a population of 0.155 million people, there are 20 qualified doctors only. In other words, one doctor is supposed to serve population of almost 8000 individuals. Due to severe weather conditions and lack of transportation facilities, staff at these health centers rarely attends patients. Respondents visiting these health centers told that only supporting staff such as ward orderlies or security guards attend the patients and give them few tablets. Additionally, in lesser Cholistan, some private health clinics are also found but there are no qualified doctors to attend patients, mostly these clinics are run by paramedics such as dispensers and nurses who attend patients with any health problem.

When respondents in greater Cholistan were asked about the measures taken in case of common health problem, they told that they depend on ethno medication for treatment from past till date. Absence of any formal health facility and transportation services for

carrying patients to the health clinics has led the people to be contended despite all the suffering, they expressed their helplessness as: “*Rohi wich-ALLAH da elaj ay*” In *Rohi* (desert), Allah Himself does treatment. This mind set reflects that Cholistanis say this as defense mechanism when they are unable to do something practical for patient’s health. In the settled areas, where people have financial resources and medical facilities, they do their best to save the life of patient, but in case of Cholistan, people relate it with Allah and accept disease and death from Him.

When asked what they do for getting relief from everyday health problem, they told that finding no other way, they immediately take some homemade remedy such as hot milk or tea, they stated as: “*Dodh karh ke pi gidha, Cha pi gidhi,*” We take hot milk, tea for immediate relief from health problems. Researcher observed that it is common practice to give hot milk for immediate relief from many minor health problems like fever, flu, tiredness, general body and rheumatic pains. Boiled milk with black pepper is also considered useful for relief from common health problems. Many other shrubs are useful for health problems.

In lesser Cholistan, there is change in practices and attitude towards treatment of health problems. In addition to the traditional homemade remedies, now non-prescribed allopathic medicines are also used which they buy from medical and general stores. Few of the respondents told that their men brought medicine for common diseases like headache, fever, cough and diarrhea etc. from settled areas and we use upon falling ill. It is interesting to mention that many respondents from lesser and greater Cholistan told that tablets are grinded in powder form and then taken with water or milk. They told that they were used to for taking shrubs in powdered form, they said that: “*Goli peeh ke cha gidhi*” We take tablets after making them powder.

In case of lesser Cholistan, where there is some awareness and education, people are adopting formal treatment methods. Due to non-availability at door step and poor sources of conveyance, though yet they use mostly self-prescribed medicine but they are shifting towards medical treatment instead of being contended just like in greater Cholistan that disease and death is from Allah and we have nothing to do against His will.

When respondents in greater Cholistan were asked what they do in case of health related emergencies and serious diseases currently and forty years back, all of them told they go use amulet because it is considered effective measure for relief. In Cholistan, when someone comes for inquiring after health of a patient, he/she insists on use of amulet for good care of patient. They ask like this: "*Tawize cha ghidd ee?*" Have you taken amulet?

In lesser Cholistan most of the respondents told that in case of severe health problems, they go to Bahawal Victoria Hospital Bahawalpur and Tehsil Head Quarter Hospital Yazman for treatment, the category „A“ and „B“ hospitals in the District. Herbal physician (hakeem) is also popular among elderly people because they believe in herbal treatment from centuries.

It shows that availability of resources and facilities determine the way people deal with the health problems in both parts of Cholistan. In case of greater Cholistan, people use amulet even in case of serious health problems because they do not have access to any health facility whereas in lesser Cholistan, patients are taken to nearby hospitals/health clinics in such situation. Forty years back, people in lesser Cholistan too used to wear amulet in case of health problems but now, with the rise in awareness and financial affordability, instead of going to *peer* for amulet and holy reading, they go to doctor for treatment of disease.

When asked about women's health problems in Cholistan, they told that women have enormous health problems in both parts of the Cholistan. Due to prevalence of

nomadic culture in Cholistan which imposes certain restrictions on women, they have poor social status and are dependent upon men in all walks of life including visiting a doctor. That is why when men have some health problems, possible efforts are made for his treatment but in case of women, least concern is shown and she waits for natural recovery from disease. Additionally, men in Cholistan do not want their women to be checked up from male doctors as matter of moral concern. In case of greater Cholistan, situation is not good; here men consider a matter of immodesty if a woman will be sitting in front of an unknown man (doctor) who may also touch her physically for medical examination. Respondents said as: “*Sharam kareyndy nain thy zaleen non naie ghin ke waindy*” They (men) feel shame and do not take women to the doctor. The situation is different in case of lesser Cholistan where respondents told that now their women can go to doctor in serious health conditions, but yet it depends upon to willingness of male members.

Paying little or no concern to the health problems of the women indicates that women are deprived of basic human right, access to health service, in the name of family honour. She is supposed to die with pain in miserable conditions but denied access to medical care due to her poor status. When the respondents were asked about medical care of women at the time of child birth, most of the respondent of greater Cholistan responded that; “*Nikky di padeshtaan khodee thee wainee ay*” Child birth needs no extra care, it happens itself.

Respondents told that forty years back, child delivery was thought to be a natural phenomenon which needed no special care even presence of TBA. Presence of any elderly women was considered more than enough at the time of child birth but now they prefer an experienced woman, she may be from the neighborhood or in most cases, the mother-in-law of an expecting woman.

Forty years back in lesser Cholistan, an experienced woman from family or tribe was called for handling child birth. In case if there was no experienced woman available within family, they called from neighboring *toba*. At present, different practices are carried out in different parts of lesser Cholistan for delivery of a child. Majority of respondents told that till date, an elderly and wise woman is called for handling delivery. While some respondents told that they call a mid- wife, in case she was not available or she was unable to handle the case in critical conditions, then rarely they consult a doctor for attending the delivery. In lesser Cholistan, few people visit doctor for child birth.

Despite an improved level of education and awareness in lesser Cholistan, respondents told that in case of caesarean section, elderly women criticize on the younger women and ridicule it by saying that: “*Peration proshun kara aayaan hein*” She has undergone surgery for nothing. All the respondents were more than fifty years of age, so they were against any consultation or check up from doctor in case of pregnancy. They responded that no extra care was needed: “*Asaan vee baal janey heen per sa koon taan na kaheen preshan di lore na pae*” We have also given birth to a number of children without any surgery, so it is not needed.

Elderly women quote themselves as example who never went to doctor for child birth. They were of the view that child birth needs no medical care, younger women just exaggerate for seeking attention and importance, they said: “*Honn deyan zaleen bahon rola pandyaan nay jay ziada kheyal rkhanyan ny*” Now a day, young women exaggerate their pregnancies. They demand extra care during pregnancy.

It reveals that beside other hindrance in women health care, women themselves are also contributing factor for adding to the already suffering women in Cholistan. A woman who is mother-in-law or elderly women in the family creates social barriers in the way of younger women for accessing health care services. Elderly women in Cholistan are not

ready to accept social change, so they ridicule younger women. Resultantly, younger women have to hide their suffering just to avoid criticism and mockery.

Major causes of child mortality in Cholistan are poor food intake of mothers, early marriage, women's involvement in laborious work, child birth handled by TBAs and prevalence of many baby specific infectious diseases. When respondents were asked about their roles in health care; they said that they perform important role in caring and looking after patients in the family. Since last forty years, care of patient is sole responsibility of the women. Their role starts from preparing shrub powder or syrup to be given to the patient. Respondents told that most of them are aware about medicinal effects of local shrubs and prepare home based remedies from them. The researcher observed that men have nothing to do about patient care except taking patient to the health center at the settled town in case of serious ailment. Until a patient is at home and not taken to health clinic, men just ask about health of patient in this way: "*Tedi sehat keween ay*" How is your health? Some of the respondents told that sometimes men even do not interact directly with the patient and just ask from women about the health of the ill family member. "*Eheda kee haal ay? Dawai dy ghiddi ay*"? How is he/she and have you given the medicine?

Researcher observed that all the men in the family do not go out for herd grazing and other outdoor activities, but despite they do not care for an ill family member. They keep gossiping with the fellowmen of the *toba* but do not take any practical step for the patient. It is because they think that it is sole responsibility of the women to care for the patient. That is why respondents in both part told that preparation of homemade remedies is responsibility of women. Sometimes, when they are not familiar with preparation method of syrup or powder of any shrub, men guide them about preparation and usage.

When respondents in greater Cholistan were asked about attitudes, awareness, practices, women's authority in decision making and social perception about family

planning from last forty year still date, their response was like it; "*Aye sub kujh Rohi ton bahir dee zaleen naal theen daa ay*" All this is practiced by women from out of the desert.

Some respondents in lesser Cholistan are aware about family planning concept and methods but they cannot practice it due to social constraints. Some respondents told that younger women can practice family planning methods with permission of their husbands. But without seeking permission of husband, it is not possible. Researcher observed that women criticize and make fun of those fellow women who adopt any family planning method. They said; "*Ball na ho wann da operation kara aienya ney*. She has adopted family planning method for having no more children.

The uncertainty about continuation of generation coupled with no concept of Planned Parenthood is major reason for not practicing family planning methods in the Cholistan. In addition to this, due to mass illiteracy, practicing family planning is considered immoral and an intervention against the will of Allah.

When the respondents in greater Cholistan were asked about source (s) of transportation for carrying the patient, all of them told that they hardly find any ride when they need it for taking patient to the health center. Respondents from areas adjacent to the track told that they could find Rangers (Army) truck but there visit is not scheduled and its good luck if any passing vehicle carry the patient to nearby settlement. Sometimes they could catch tractor trolley going back to settled area after dropping luggage at any *toba*. They said; "*Ranger aaly ghidi wenday nay jay qismat naal aa wanjen tay*" Rangers vehicles carry patient if they pass by chance.

When respondents in lesser Cholistan were asked about conveyance facilities for carrying patients; majority of them told that either they or their relatives (living at the same *toba*) have bike which is used for taking patient to the doctor. In case, patient needs

emergency medical treatment and cannot be carried on bike, they call a cab driver from nearest settlement which could reach in around 3-4 hours.

Since in the greater Cholistan, there are no tracks and means of transportation, therefore patients die in helplessness. Here commonly used transport source is camel whereas donkeys are used a pack animal. Both of these means cannot carry patient who needs comfortable ride, second they are too slow to reach any health service. That is why Army vehicles are only ray of hope but that is rarely available and only those people who are living near track between sand dunes.

When respondents in greater Cholistan were asked about awareness of and need for general hygiene conditions, all of them reported that they did not think that they could fall ill due to lack of cleanliness. People in Cholistan believe that increasing number of diseases is not due to lack of hygiene conditions but it is because of going far away from traditional and simple food of Cholistan consisting of butter and milk. They said: “*ALLAH saeen nay dahdhi barkat rakhi ay dodh makhan wich*” Allah Almighty has made milk and butter as a blessed food.

It is believed that if one uses traditional and pure food of Cholistan, there would be no disease. Some respondents of greater Cholistan and most of lesser Cholistan were of the view that now health problems are increasing. In greater Cholistan, respondents were not even aware with the names of common disease such as cardiac problems, diabetes and blood pressure etc.

In lesser Cholistan, few of the respondents told that they were aware about importance of cleanliness for maintain good health. There is also concept of *miswak* (twig) for cleaning teeth. Believing that living neat and clean is not necessary for staying health shows that people living in Cholistan are likely to living in Stone Ages. They think that if butter and milk are major taken in routine diet, there will be no disease.

8.2 Part-II: Education

“Asan balon kon school kaeen nhi bhaj dy” We do not send our children for schooling.

“Jehra niki yan nika parh wanny oh hathon nikal wainda ay” If a girl or boy gets educated, he/she looks down upon us.

“Ithan koi school ay na ostad andaa ey koi”. Here there is neither any school nor any teachers comes.

“Dheyaan behnaan ghar changyaan lgdeyan henn, bahir kadheso tey lok kee akh sann”

Girls are representative of family honour, if we send them to schools, what other people will say?

“Hun nikayan kon sheher bhi bhijendy haan” Now we send our sons to urban areas for education.

These responses reflect state of education in Cholistan where people are not much concerned about education of their children. People in Cholistan perceive that an educated person cannot adjust to the local culture and economic activities. Nature of economic activities in Cholistan such as animal herding and grazing are best suited to the illiterate persons. Staying in Cholistan with availability of only *toba* water for drinking and spending whole day without food is not expected from an educated person. Therefore, in the context of Cholistan, formal education is not rewarding in term of economic benefits. Elder people in Cholistan are fearful from education of their new generation because they believe that after being educated, children will give up Cholistan area and nomadic culture. State of constant movement within and out of Cholistan has troubled the educational attainment for the fewer who want it.

There are no formal educational facilities, so there is informal education how to tend cattles and prepare handicrafts. The informal education is through watch and learns method which needs no age specification and certification. Men in Cholistan think that women

education will make them deviant from their centuries old norms and values; they will become immodest after getting formal education. In the context of Cholistan, peculiar socio economic and geographical conditions coupled with poor social status of women are contributing factors for mass deprivation for of women from formal education in the Cholistan.

Respondents told that in the absence of formal educational institutions, women were playing important role in imparting informal education to the children in Cholistan. When respondents were asked about sending their children for education, in greater Cholistan they told that from forty years, there are no educational facilities available. On the one hand, there are no educated persons in the Cholistan, who could serve as teacher, on the other hand due to hard and harsh geographic conditions, no one from settled areas is willing to serve there as teacher, therefore women are educating children in informal way, they said: "*Ethan na koi school aey na koi ostad anda aey*" Here there is neither any school nor any teachers from outside is willing to come and serve.

Respondents from lesser Cholistan told that in the past there were fewer schools for basic formal education but students' enrolment and attendance of teachers was very poor. They said that teachers did not come for several months and school remained close. In addition, there were no facilities in the schools like adequate and proper class rooms, furniture, jute matting and teaching aids like chalk and black boards etc. Many times a school consists of a shady tree where teacher (s) and students sit whereas in many cases there are single- room schools. They said: "*Na koi ostad anda hah na koi bal school jandy ney*" Neither teacher used to come here nor did any child go to school.

Many respondents from lesser Cholistan told that presently there are schools at some *tobas*. Researcher observed that physical infrastructure of such schools is poor and inadequate. A number of schools are without proper class room, teacher offices and

boundary wall. Here is detail of exiting schools in Cholistan which are supposed to serve a population of 0.155 million.

Table 6. Total No. of Schools in Cholistan

No. of boys high schools	No. of girls high schools	Total No. of boy's elem. schools	Total No. of girl's elem. schools	Total No. of boys primary schools	Total No. of girl's primary Schools	Co-edu. schools *	Total boys enrolled	Total girls enrolled
03	01	07	07	93	06	131	10,843	4,929

Schools run by Government of Punjab, CDA, National Commission for Human Development, National Education Foundation, and Punjab Education Foundation

The given table shows that there are 248 schools established by provincial government and NGOs. The number of enrolled students was 15,772 which mean 63 students per school on average. Total number of schools working in Cholistan for both boys and girls show that there are fewer opportunities for female education.

The researcher visited different government and non-government schools in the lesser Cholistan area. Government schools are run by government of the Punjab, CDA, National Education Foundation and National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), whereas NGOs run schools belong to, National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), Punjab Rural Support Programme (PRSP) which shows that now government and non-government agencies are focusing on the education in Cholistan.

When asked about distance of school from *toba*, respondents told that the schools cannot cover all *tobas*. Sometimes this distance exceeds than 3-5 Kilometers from *toba*. Since there is no transportation in Cholistan area, therefore much distance between home and school is one of the reasons for poor enrolment in the desert area.

On the one hand, there are no facilities for education in greater Cholistan. On the other hand, available schools in lesser Cholistan are much distance which is not feasible to be covered by student in the absence of any transportation facilities in the desert area. In

many cases, parents were willing to send children for education but unavailability or much distance from *toba* made it impossible.

When asked the respondents about willingness of parents to send their children in the schools forty years back, they told that in the past parents were not willing to send their children for education because they thought it as wastage of time and energy. They expressed like this: “*Balon kon school wan ke kya kar kar ghinsan tey waqat ee zaya kresan*” Why to waste time by sending children to schools? What they will get if get educated?

But currently, there is change in mind set as a result of interaction with people from settled areas. That is why now some parents send their children for education. Now parents think that there education can provide an earning opportunity to their children. They expressed this change as: “*Hun aseem vee apny balon ko parhai di bajay maal charan tey lagany haan*” We send our children for helping in grazing instead of education.

But few respondents told that they still did not want to educate their children because it is not beneficial in terms of economic benefits. They believe that their children cannot secure any job in the settled areas. Therefore, they want their children to go for grazing herds and becoming helping hand for family. They said: “*Asan apny balon kon parhan di bajaye maal charan wasty bejna chahndy han*” Instead of sending children for schooling, we want them to help in herd grazing.

Different attitude of parents and family members for sending children to schools reflects their perception about utility of education in their life. One section of the Cholistanis think that education is just wastage of resources and it is not beneficial for them. This attitude is exiting in the aloof areas of greater Cholistan, where people have least interaction with people from settled area and are using none of information channels like

electronic and print media. That is why people living in greater Cholistan are satisfied being uneducated and grazing herds.

On the contrary to this, some people think that education can be a source for earning, so their children should go for getting it. Though some parents have soft corner for educating their children but they only take it in term of earning money but for the sake of education. Respondents living in lesser Cholistan (near settled areas) want more to educate their children. But due to mass illiteracy, still some parents think that education is not necessary and instead of attending school, children should go for grazing cattles.

When respondents were asked about providing equal educational opportunities to boys and girls, they told that preferably boys are sent for education. They believe that boys have to lead the household in future, so their education is more beneficial than girls. They think that education would make the females immodest. They expressed in these words: “*Nikyaan di parhai una kon bay haya bana deni aey*”. Education makes the girls immodest.

When asked that how education is making their girls deviant from cultural values, they said when our girls have interaction with girls from settled areas, they become familiar with ways of moral corruption. Believing that education will make girls immodest and they will give up values of Cholistan indicates that parents have less trust on daughters and they do not want their girls to adopt culture of urban/settled areas where in which they are somehow given some rights as human being. They send boys even to urban areas for education but they consider it their culture will be at risk if girls will be educated. Parents are only concerned and worried about the morality of girls whom they do not want to let interact with students from settled areas, lest they would be make them familiar with ways of moral corruption. This is reflection of nomadic culture where women have bounded life under cultural restrictions and male dominancy. That is why girls are free to get primary

education where is it available. They did not make any serious effort for female education as that for male.

When asked that currently in the absence of formal educational institutions, how younger ones are taught norms, values and needed skills for survival in the hostile environment of Cholistan, respondents from greater Cholistan told that women are performing this role from past till date. They informally educate their children about local behavioral codes, about fetching water and its preservation for longer time, how to collect wooden fuel, cooking and distributing food among family members according to their defined status, they said: "*Sary da zaleen ton ee sikhian dyan ney*" Youngsters are taught different skills by women.

When asked about role of women in educating younger ones, respondents from lesser Cholistan told that in the past women were responsible for teaching informally. Presently women are facilitating their children for going to school. They prepared food for children and supervise their school going where children were getting education.

This shows roles and responsibilities of the women in the family life in Cholistan. They are making their efforts to transfer knowledge and culture to the next generation in the environment without other sources of education and learning such as schools, colleges, electronic and print media. In Cholistan, a woman as mother is more caring for her kids as compared to the father. She has modified her role with the changing conditions in the case of lesser Cholistan where there are some opportunities for formal education. Now she is responsible for sending children to school and preparing food for them along with other domestic chores. Some respondents told that they send their sons to the urban areas/cities for education, they told it proudly: "*Asaan apny nikyaan kon shehr bhijen dy haan parhan laee*" We send our sons (only) to city areas for education.

When asked about why they did not send girls to the urban areas for education, they said that girls cannot be sent there because they are honour of the family. Family members and especially parents are fearful of societal criticism and social stigmatization of educating daughters, they said like this: “*Dheyan behenan kon school bhejya tey lok kee keh saan*” If we send our girls to urban areas for education, there will be social stigma on the family.

This situation shows that on the one hand joint and extended family system provide protection and support to the individuals and families, but on the other hand, there is social pressure for doing many unwanted things. In case girl(s) and her parents are willing for education, yet they do not send daughters and sisters for education due to fear of social pressure exerted by family and community at large on doing so.

When asked about how parents fulfill educational expenditures of children, they told that there are different strategies for meeting educational expenses. First, they save some money from selling milk and butter for this purpose; second, women work as agricultural labourer in settled areas and earn money for this purpose. Parents meet ordinary educational expenditures from saving but they sell cattles for meeting big amount, they said: “*Jey ziada paisy lor howay tu apna koi maal dhandha waich ghindy hann*” We sell any of cattles like a cow, goat and/or sheep for paying big amount.

This is reflective of changed mindset in the lesser Cholistan. Where currently people are spending their savings on educating their children and are sending them to stay away from home for good education. They utilize their relationships and arrange their children stay in urban areas at their friends or relatives’ home. In many instances, students are admitted to hostels and private boarding houses where the children stay and get education in the urban areas. Another most effective strategy of educating children is having practice of “two homes” which means some people maintain one house in the desert and another one in

the urban areas not only to avail educational facilities for children but also other facilities like health for all family members.

When asked about sharing workload of school going children, respondents told that in the ordinary days, women do extra work for reducing burden of domestic work on school going children. But in the cotton picking and wheat harvesting season, they are helpless and stop children from school for several weeks. Researcher came to know that there was poor attendance in cotton picking season and in some areas schools were completely closed.

When respondents in greater Cholistan were asked about currently educational facilities, some of them told that they are willing to educate their children but they do not know that how they can do it. They told that there are neither schools by CDA, nor by any NGO, besides any teacher from out of Cholistan is also not willing to come for teaching. So how their children could get education; *“Asan bachon kon keewen parhaon itna taan koi school vee kai naee”*. How we can educate our children? There is no school.

When asked about religious education of children, respondents from greater Cholistan told that in the past least attention was given due to poor awareness about importance of religion. Therefore, hearsay was only source of religious awareness/knowledge in the past. In the absence of any formal institution such as *madrassa* for religious education, elderly women impart their knowledge to children.

In the greater Cholistan mostly respondents told that reading of holy Quran is considered enough religious education for girls, they think that religious education makes the girls pious and modest: *“Dheeyan wich sharam haya aa wainda ay neik thee waindyaan henn jey Quran Pak parh parh ghinan”* Daughters become pious and modest after learning holy Quran.

Since there is no authentic source of religious knowledge in Cholistan, that is why there exists superstitiousness and people value many things as part of religion. Giving more

importance to religious knowledge for girls than formal education is because there is perception that religious education has more deep effects on the personality making the girls modest and obedient towards parents and cultural values.

When asked about effects of migration on education of school going children in Cholistan. Few respondents in lesser Cholistan said that manpower is divided into two groups, one group stays at permanent home and school going children are kept there to ensure continuity in school and other group goes to greater Cholistan for grazing herds. They said: “*Asan school jaan aly balon kon nhi ghin ke wanj dy*” We did not take the school going children with us.

In case of greater Cholistan, they told that migration adversely affects process of formal and religious education of children. Due to migration there is break in continuity of education, therefore in an interval of several months children forget previously learned knowledge and they have to take a new start on return to the *toba*.

In lesser Cholistan there is positive change regarding education of children. Forty years ago, government education department, CDA, semi-government and Non-government Organizations, working at local and international did not pay little attention for education in Cholistan. Currently, some parents also send their children in private schools for quality education. Researcher herself observed that many families from lesser Cholistan have migrated to settled villages for education of their children. Whereas some families have arranged rickshaws for pick and drop of their children for school

Pakistani society is a patriarchal, patrilocal and patrilineal society coupled with gender discrimination. Cholistan, being a nomadic society and backward area of the country is a living example. Lack of social awareness, illiteracy, ignorance, poor social status of women and cultural restrictions: all contribute towards poor literacy and education of women.

8.3 Part-III: Economy

“Rohi wich bus maal di kamaiee ay” In the desert, the only source of income is livestock.

“Jadaan lor paway, kai bher bakri nika maal bech ghindy sey” When money is needed, we sell goat or sheep.

“Kheer gheo ketay ata chawal lay ghidy” We sell milk and butter and buy flour and rice with the money.

Cholistan being desert area has limited opportunities for livelihood. There is no industry or other earning opportunities for the people of Cholistan particularly in the greater part. In addition, due to un-availability of irrigation water, there is nearly no agri farming in Cholistan area. Furthermore, due to very poor literacy rate, catching any formal earning opportunity is not possible for people of Cholistan. In these conditions, livestock is the only option left for earning livelihood. Other than selling cattles like cows, goats, sheep and camels, dairy products like milk and butter are also source of earning money. But due to lack of access to proper market for selling dairy animals, middle men pay very little amount to the owners” who sell their products at very low price.

Women in Cholistan are equally participating in economic activities and have a significant role in raising livestock but their role is given poor recognition. From last forty years till date, women are performing several economic roles and supporting men in animal husbandry, cottage industry, similarly they are supporting men in agro farming in lesser Cholistan area.

When respondents were asked about economic activities in the desert areas in the past, respondents from greater Cholistan told that animal husbandry was major source of livelihood. From past, agro farming was not possible due to geographical characteristics of the area and lack of irrigation water. Therefore, livelihood was dependent upon raising cattles such as camels, cows, goats and sheep. They sell animal, milk, *ghee*, use skin and

wool of animal and prepare handicrafts. In the milieu of Cholistan, cattles are not only source of livelihood but herd size is also considered as a status symbol for the family and clan. Respondent expressed it like this: “*Jeh day janwar bahly, oh ee dolat ala samjhea wainda ay*” Those who have more cattles are considered wealthy.

Animal husbandry is not only major source of livelihood for the people in Cholistan but it also determines social status of owners. Therefore, people in Cholistan increase number of animals such as cows, camels, sheep and goats.

In lesser Cholistan, economic activities were dependent upon animal husbandry in the past. But at present, there are few opportunities such as working as labourer in agro-farming in settled areas and doing some jobs in urban areas. Laborers working in agro fields receive wage either in cash or kind. Terms and conditions of wages in kind are decided before harvesting crops. They said like this. “*Asan kanak wadhy saan ty khan leey dany mil jandy hahen*” We harvest wheat crop and get wheat grain as wages.

When respondents were asked about currently how they get money for buying basic household needs like wheat, flour, rice, sugar, pulses and clothes etc. In greater Cholistan, they said that they sell an milk, *ghee* and animal like goat or sheep and purchase household goods for several weeks, while remaining amount is saved for future needs.

Upon asking about how they get money for social events like arranging or attending a marriage or child-birth, they told that they sell cattles depending upon the nature of the ceremony and expected expenditures. If the event was in far-off relatives or friends, they spend little money for buying clothes and giving net amount to the family, but if marriage was in close relative, then they sell more than one small animals or one big animal, they described it: “*Jay lagdy howan taan pahr ga bhair ya bakri bach deti*” When ceremony is in the close relatives, we sell sheep, goats or cow.

Respondents told that in the lesser Cholistan, forty years back, they sold animals for meeting basic household needs but sometime selling butter also served the purpose. Men carry vessel of the butter to a nearby settlement and return with groceries like wheat, rice, sugar and tea leaves etc.

In addition to livestock, currently there is some cultivation in the lesser Cholistan; few respondents told that they sell grains for fulfilling basic needs. For attending social events in the past, mostly respondents sold their animals while few of them borrowed money if they could not sell animal at fair price.

When respondent were asked about agri farming as source of livelihood in the Cholistan. Most of them told that in the lesser Cholistan, some forty years back, there was rare cultivation on small pieces of land between sand dunes after adequate rainfall. There was fragmented cultivation of barley and mustard in the area, they said: "*Jey mosmi barshan thee jawan tay kanak aag cha gaddi*" If there is seasonal rain, they cultivate barley and mustard.

When asked about cottage industry as source of income in Cholistan, respondents from greater Cholistan told forty years ago, they were weaving clothes, *chunri*, *longi*, *khes*, *shaal*, rugs, mats, bed sheets, carpets. For the preparation of these handicrafts, a thread is woven from sheep wool, camel or goat hairs and then it is used for weaving and knitting. In most of the cases, the responsibility of men ended after preparation of thread and process of weaving and knitting is done by women, but they cannot get the money themselves. Deal of selling handicrafts is done by men so they receive the money.

Respondents told that they do not have access to the market directly; this job is done by middlemen, therefore weavers get a very little return of their hard work. They think that it is not feasible for them to sell their handy products in the urban areas. First, there are no conveyance facilities, second they did not like and feel easy to visit city. They said like this:

“Eh kum sady kolon naee theen da shehar wanjan aala” We are unable to visit urban areas for selling things.

When respondents were asked about cottage industry as source of earning at present, many of them told that they are still engaged in weaving. But with the passage of time, this livelihood activity is diminishing due to poor rewards for workers in the greater Cholistan. One of the famous handicraft is Cholistan *chunri* which is popular and given as gift to the guests and visitors coming from out of Bahawalpur region. The *chunri* is available in many cloth markets of Bahawalpur but Cholistan women receive little return whereas maximum earning goes to the middle man. They described it in these words: *“Sakoon taan ik chunri dy char pais ee mild ney bus”* We receive little money for a *chunri*.

In the lesser Cholistan forty years back, there were manual and wooden looms and many items like wearing clothes, carpets and mats were woven. But currently, majority of them have abandoned this occupation. They told that poor financial return against hard work is reason for giving up cottage industry. Weaver were suffering from many problems like sometimes if the prepared item was not according to the requirement of the middle man/contractor, he did not buy and left the weavers at their fate. Many times, contractors pretended that the item was defective and delayed the payment to the weavers. This is economic exploitation of the poor Cholistanis due to their simplicity and non-familiarity with the market.

When respondents were asked about women roles in animal husbandry, they told that in greater Cholistan, from past till date women have very important role in tending animals. Women take care of the non- grazing animals such as lamb, kids and calves which are left at home due to their inability to join herd, so women arranged fodder for them. They said: *“Jehry laily pathory khary howann unhaan wasty ghah pathah asaan aap kar ghindy haan tey balaan wasty tokar pani vee”* We have to arrange fodder for lamb, calves and kids.

In case, the *toba* or well is situated away from *ghopa*, it is responsibility of the women to fetch water for human. Sometimes they drive animal herd to the *toba* and make them drink water. Researcher observed that although men are also found sitting around *ghopa* but they did not went for fetching water for animals and said like this: “*Sadyaan zaaleen khod pani bahr ghindeyaan hann*” Our women fetch water by their own.

Respondents told that from past till date women have to milk animals like cows and goats. First priority for milk utilization is its use as part of food. Remaining quantity is churned for making butter and whey. Researcher observed that women get up early in the morning and churn the milk. Butter is stored in silver bowls. When there is need to buy household goods, usually 5-7 kilograms of butter is taken for selling in the nearby settled area, women narrated in this way: “*Jaden paisyaan di lor paway, tay maal dhandanda ya kheey gheo waich ghida*”

When we need money, men take the butter and milk to the urban area for selling. When asked about this practice at present, some of the respondents told that now they churn small quantity of milk because they sell the milk at milk collection points or to milkman at some places situated near track. Two of respondents told that the representative of the milk collection center visit the *toba* daily and collect milk. “*Naal aly toby tay dodhi anda ay asan vee pana kheer dey deendy sey*” Milk man daily comes to a nearby *toba*, we sell milk there.

When there is rainfall in the greater Cholistan and pastures are green, one or two men of the family members take non-milking animals to the greater Cholistan for grazing, whereas milking animals are left at home in lesser Cholistan under supervision of women and one or two men. Women have to feed the animals, make them drink water

At present, due to agro farming in the lesser Cholistan, people face some problems in grazing the animals because they cannot let the animals free because the animals can

enter into crop fields and cause harm which is not tolerated by the owner farmers or their tenants. They said: *“Rohi wich maal nhi sambhalna ponda”* In the desert there is no need to be careful about free grazing of animals.

When asked about change in economic role of women over the past forty years or so, majority of respondents from lesser Cholistan reported that now they have to work as wage workers in the agro farming in the surrounding settled areas. Farmers of settled areas hire women as daily wagers for various agricultural works like pouring pesticides/insecticides, herbicides, sowing and harvesting, cotton picking and other such chores. Majority of the respondents told that land owners gave money on daily basis or through verbal agreement (lump-sum money for doing any specific labour work). They expressed about wages in these words: *“Zaemndar keela dy pasiy moka ke kam krndey henn”* Landlords give lump sum for working at one acre.

Respondents told that cotton picking is another livelihood opportunity for women in lesser Cholistan. This season continues for 2-3 months every year. Women reach cotton fields and pick cotton from in the fields till afternoon. After the picking has been finished, wages are paid in two ways: either in kind (at the rate of 5% of the total yield) or cash (per kg. of total yield). In the first case, women return with cotton while in the second case, they get money. They are happier with cash than kind because they could use immediately for meeting needs. In case of kind (cotton), they have to wait till it is at least ten kilograms so that may sell. They said: *“Nagad paisy milen taan lor oh waley proi thee waindi ay”* Net cash is used immediately for meeting needs of the household.

When asked about economic challenges and difficulties from past till date, respondents in the greater Cholistan told that there were immense challenges to meet basic amenities of life from past and this condition continues till date. Neither in the past nor at present, there are any job opportunities for men and women of greater Cholistan. Due to

nomadic life style, livelihood in Cholistan is based on livestock and its products such as milk, butter and wool. During last forty years or so, certain families, informally skilled for weaving, have abandoned this occupation due to lack of access to market and poor financial return. Respondents told that their men are not educated and skilled to find any job in the urban areas. Here we have lands and can cultivate but there is no availability water for irrigation. They expressed their disappointment in this these words: “*Sindh wich tan pani kae nahi, Rohi kon kithon labhsi*” There is no irrigation water in Sindh (Near cultivated areas), so how it can be provided to the Cholistan.

This expression is indication of feelings of deeper disappointment about economic opportunities in Cholistan. In the desert area, major source of income is animal husbandry which has also serious challenges. First, there are too few veterinary facilities in the greater Cholistan and thousands of camels, cows and goats die every year from many epidemics. Second, there are droughts which take away everything and leave local people empty handed. They said: “*Jadaan vee qaal paway taan koi shey kaeen nahi bachdi*” When there is drought, nothing is left behind

Researcher observed that Cholistan people stick to their culture and place and is not ready to work out of Cholistan. They have accepted all misery and sufferings as „divine will“ and did not have inspiration for resisting against the situation. They are contented with their existing life style. When asked that if they are willing to work in the settled areas, they rejected this idea in this way: “*Jo Malik deta ay, oh dher ay, kahen di nokri nahi theendi*” What so ever Creator has given is enough, we cannot be slaves.

When respondents were asked about change in economic conditions forty years back and currently, Majority of respondents in the lesser Cholistan told that their economic condition has improved as compared to past. Forty years earlier, there were no viable source of livelihood except livestock, but currently they can cultivate and work as wage laborers in

the fields. I have given details of the land distributed among locals for agriculture and the irrigation system in Chapter-1. They told that in the past, women were not allowed to leave home for any livelihood activity but at present they can go for working as daily wagers. Similarly, currently they can also go for harvesting wheat and cotton picking. They described it: *“Pehlaan kaheen beh dey pasy kam karan kaeen nhi waindy hasyj, honn har pasy waindy sey”* In the past we were not allowed to work out side home, but now we can.

Though economy has shifted from nomadic to sedentary in lesser Cholistan, but it is observed that mostly men like to be free and enjoy gossips whereas women have to work hard in and out of the home. Majority of women were observed working for most of the time. Despite contributing more than men, women are not stakeholder in economic matters. They are not allowed to spend money with their free will. They explain it as: *“Sady bandy kehndy ney zaalan ko paisy deet tay oh vigar waysann”* If women would be given money, they may become out of men’s control.

Summing up the analysis, health, education and economy institutions are playing important function in the Cholistan. In the absence of health facilities and awareness, people are dependent on homemade remedies and holy reading for treatment of diseases. Resultantly, health condition of people and especially women in Cholistan is poor. Health care is sole responsibility of women. Since past, there is no formal education in greater Cholistan but currently in lesser Cholistan, there are some schools where students are getting education. Women are not allotted land; therefore they are find working hard in lesser part where they have to arrange fodder and woeden fuel. In the absence of formal education facilities, women transfer life skill to next generation. Similarly, economy is based on livestock in Cholistan and women are equally participating in economic activities. Due to nomadic culture, roles of women are not recognised and they are leading a subhuman life.

9. Chapter-IX: Frame Work of the Study

The frame work of this chapter falls under two headings. In the first heading, we have discussed the notion of social change and related the changes in Cholistan with a theory of change. The second part discusses the entire notion of supranational and national efforts for women development.

9.1 Part-1: Social Change

“*Nothing is constant except death and taxes*”³⁰⁴ Goes the old American saying. Even the thoughts about death have changed as life expectancy around the world has increased over the past few decades. Social change refers to:

*The transformation of culture and social institutions over time*³⁰⁵ “ or
“*a large number of people engaged in activities that differ from those in
which they or their parents engaged some time before*”³⁰⁶.

It has at least four characteristics being happening all the times, can be intentional and /or unplanned, being controversial, and some changes are more important than others. These characteristics of the changes are explained by many scholars and intellectuals in the shape of their philosophies or according to their thoughts. In the field of social change, there is no single theory which can explain it in its totality rather a galaxy of theoretical perspectives have explained the matter in more detail. The first scholar who explained the notion of social change was the 14th century sociologist and anthropologist Abdul Rahman Ibn-Khaldun (1332-1406). Later joined by many other founders and modern sociologists like, Marx, Durkheim, and Auguste Comte explained the phenomenon of social change. All these sociologists and social scientists believed in the social characteristics of human needs.

Ibn-e-Khaldun was pleader of the dynamic nature of human civilization and was of the opinion that human societies move from simple to complex forms. Based on this

³⁰⁴ John J. Macionis, *Sociology*, 12th ed.(New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc, 2008).632.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Francis E. Merrill, *Culture and Society : An Introduction to Sociology* (New York: Printice Hall, 1952).110.

assumption, he has divided the human societies into two types of desert civilization (Beduins) and the sedentary civilization. The former is found of outlying regions like deserts and mountains and the latter near the cities³⁰⁷. This leads us to believe that human beings are divided into two groups of the nomads and sedentary people. Nomadic life precedes the sedentary life, or in other words, the movement from primitive to civilized cultures. In the beginning, every sedentary society is nomadic which with the passage of time transforms into sedentary or settled life pattern. Auguste Comte believed that;

*Human societies evolve in a unilinear way- that is in one line of development. According to them, social change meant progress towards something better. They saw change as positive and beneficial. To them the evolutionary process implied that societies would necessarily reach new and higher levels of civilization.*³⁰⁸

All the Sociologists particularly The Cyclic Theorists believed societies pass through three stages of development. That L.H Morgan believed that there were three basic stages in the process: savagery, barbarism and civilization³⁰⁹. Auguste Comte's ideas relating to the three stages in the development of human thought and also of society namely-the theological, the metaphysical and the positive in a way represent the three basic stages of social change³¹⁰.

This analogy of the western sociologists is close to the cyclic evolutionary theory of Ibn- Khaldun, who said that societies pass through three stages of development namely, the growth, the development and the decay stages but the historical facts do not frequently support the validity of the theory nor it is necessary that all the societies pass through the same stages at regular intervals.

The case of Cholistan is much closer to Ibne Khaldun's theory of social change particularly the lesser part of the desert is now a semi-nomadic or semi-sedentary culture

³⁰⁷ Fida Muhammad, "Ibnkhaldun's Theory of Social Change," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 15(2).25-45.

³⁰⁸ <http://www.sociologyguide.com/social-change/evolutionary-theories.php>.dated 25.11.2014

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid

with agriculture, irrigation water, roads, electric power, education, health facilities, and auto-communication.

Social change is understood as a transformation of cultural and social organizational structure with the passage of time. Societies never remain static especially in modern rapidly changing world in which economic, political, social, and cultural changes are too frequent. Change also occurs in every segment of social life like in social structure, social behavior, social institutions, social relations of a society and of community people etc. Mostly large scale, invisible and sustained change in behavior patterns result in social change. Its reasons can be including the attempts of the governments to engineer changes through social policies and projects etc. and again, it is the government to tackle the consequences of such changes if going negative.

Social change is of different types and covers a specific sphere of life like the civilization change which cause changes in social *dicritica* or the changes in dress and diet, production technologies, communication system etc. The present study is more a topic of social policy or social welfare policy predicaments in Pakistan. I have discussed these predicaments below with respect to the development of various institutions like health, education, economy in particular. These are the social indicators which help for measuring the stage of social development of a society. Pakistan is a poor and third world country where more than 25% people live under extreme poverty or live on US \$ 1.25 a day³¹¹.

The following World Bank report of 2006, help comprehend the nature of poverty and the poors in Pakistan which shows that more than 56% of Pakistani population will face a

³¹¹ Asian Development Bank, "Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2014,"(Asian Development Bank 2014).60.

more than 50% probability of extreme poverty during the coming years. The overarching protection strategy for the vulnerable people is either lacking or missing³¹².

In 2014, the conditions worsened even more instead of improving and achieving the MDGs in poverty reduction. A report published in daily Dawn Karachi, quoting the World Bank poverty assessment in Pakistan has highlighted a depressing situation. The analysis says that during 2014 if per capita per day income is assumed to be US \$ 1.25, the below the poverty line population could be over 20% of the total population. This assessment was based on the 2008 estimated population figures. If this income is raised to US \$ 2 as per international standard for middle income countries, the majority of Pakistani population i.e. more than 60% will fall below the poverty line³¹³.

As a result of this situation and some other determinants of social policy like geography of the country, defence spending, prevalent corruption in the country etc. very little is left for social policy spending. Again, women are the worst affectees in a harsh culture of the country where even state has shown persistent apathy towards them. The state policies have been persistently downgrading the women status.

An international report on women status in ten countries entitled “The 10 worst countries for women” reported that in Pakistan there exists wide spread disparities between sexes particularly in all fields of life. In economy and labour force participation, there is a wide gap between opportunity and availability structure in the job market for women which have rendered three quarters of Pakistani women away from labour force as against 86% of men. Education is another sector in which there exists a wide difference between literacy rate of women and men. According to some reports only 67% of school-age girls are

³¹²World Bank and Gallup 2006. *Preliminary Findings From Social Safety Nets Survey 2005*. Presentation, Islamabad September, 2006.

³¹³ Daily Dawn. dated 8.12.2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1110248> surfed on 10.12.2014.

enrolled in primary school, and 31% in secondary schools against 77% and 41% boys were enrolled in schools³¹⁴ if we do not count dropout rate for girls after enrolment.

Women in Pakistan irrespective of rural or urban backgrounds are poor and illiterate. She works for more than 15 hours a day and her labour is considered as her responsibility in the sense it is never recognized or compensated. She is supposed to be a mother of five children as well as a good worker who can never complain her tiredness or even sickness. Women wake up much earlier than men and start the daily hard chores like lighting the fire, saying their prayers, milking animals, preparing tea and meals, and then she has to fetch water and fuel wood as well. In addition, they have to clean and wash the dishes, tend the animals and look after the children and aged and the sick. Finally, after 15-16 hours drudgery, she goes to her bed when all the rest have been sleeping³¹⁵.

In Pakistan, at least a dozen of legislations have been framed to protect the women from the clutches of oppression of all kinds like economic, educational, social, familial, but the state laws remained on the side of the angels. It shows the state will and power towards women welfare. Not only in the post-independence era but also in the pre-independence period, many laws were enacted to protect the women but the laws went on multiplying with multiplying the miseries and agonies of women.

9.2 Part- II: Social Change and Social Institutions in Cholistan

Here is brief description of social change that has occurred in the social institutions in the Cholistan over the last forty years.

³¹⁴ Alexander E.M. Hess, 24/7 Wall St. 8 a.m. EST November 29, 2014 at <http://pakistan.worldnewsviews.com/> dated 30-11-2014

³¹⁵ Farida Shaheed and Khawar Mumtaz, "Women in Pakistan: Two Steps Forward One Step Back," (London: Zed Press, 1987).21-2.

9.2.1 Changes in Marriage Institution

*Bought and sold, beaten and mutilated, even killed with impunity and social approval, dispossessed and disinherited despite legal safeguards*³¹⁶.

This is the picture drawn by an official report about the status of woman in Pakistan.

The marriages are mostly endogamous and the common mode of marriage is *watta satta* (exchange) followed by a marriage by purchase. As a result of this arranged marriage system, a woman loses her status and her future and life matters are decided by the family elder males. Consequently, a woman after being sold for marriage or exchanged for another woman for marriage has no right to say anything in the family as she is a purchased commodity.

In Cholistan, a woman is not allowed to say anything about her life even and is not supposed to say „no“ in her marriage matters. She is sold, bought, beaten and insulted but with social approval. She is killed in the name of the family honour. Her status is not different than the general culture of harshness towards women in the country as a whole.

In the lesser part of Cholistan, somewhat changes have occurred in the institutions and now women have an emerging say in the decision making. Similarly the marriage by purchase mode has declined due to awareness in the area.

9.2.2 Changes in Family Institution

As social change refers to change in the institutional structures and functions, this study will discuss the changes occurred in the basic institutions in Cholistan during the last forty years, of which family and marriage is one institution. I will highlight woman status in terms of certain indicators like her status in the family and marriage, economic status, educational and health statuses etc. In the next chapter, the study will present the changes occurred in the roles of women due to change in the institutions and her status.

Our research question is that what impacts the induced changes have on the roles of

³¹⁶Government of Pakistan, "Women Status in Pakistan "(Islamabad: National Commission on the Status of Women, 1985). p. 2.

women in Cholistan but at the same time study has also to describe the status of women as both, the role and status are like the two faces of the same coin and cannot be separated.

When we talk about women of Cholistan, their life have similarities with the life of rural women of Pakistan who have low educational, health, economic, poor social condition in all walks of life. Many studies have been made about land of Cholistan but there is very less or nothing about women. While women of Cholistan have mostly been discussed in context of their colourful dress and beauty which has nothing to do with their roles, status and their development. Cholistan is an area which is remote from modern developed world; deprived of the basic facilities of modern life. But we cannot claim that life is static here, life is also going under change in even desert. Understanding of actual condition of women cannot be developed merely by study of their current situation. If one is keen to explore their life phenomenon, it is necessary to know about the women in the general Pakistani context which we have discussed above.

I have discussed that Cholistan has two parts namely the greater Cholistan and the lesser Cholistan. Changes have taken place in all of the institutions in lesser Cholistan and the greater part is still relatively the same as it was forty years back.

In most nomadic societies, the family system is patriarchal, patrilocal and patrilineal and Cholistan is a desert having nomadic mode of life. In poor and backward societies, the family structure is mostly extended or joint as a source of social protection and safety of each and every individual member of the family or clan and tribe, hence Cholistan is not an exception. In the greater part of the desert, the family structure is still extended and joint but some changes have occurred in the lesser part.

The family is headed by a male member particularly the elder member in the family and all powers and authorities are for him to exercise. Inter familial and intra-familial matters are settled by male members and women have nothing to do with their affairs.

In lesser Cholistan, the structure of the family has changed a bit and now instead of a nuclear family system the people have a „two homes“ system in which one family is settled in the sub-urban or urban area to avail the modern facilities of education for the young generation and health facilities for all the members of the joint and extended family and even the clan. The common type of family is the joint family system and matters are settled on the basis of the joint family.

In Muslim societies, mothers are given more respect and her say in all domestic matters is final but in Cholistan even mothers are denied this respect and are not consulted in matters of their daughters or sons, it is totally a male prerogative. She cannot possess any property and all her property is what she has in the form of her golden and silver ornaments and colourful dresses but still she is not a sole owner of the gold and silver. If and when needed, the husband or father -in-law can sell out the gold.

Traditionally found love, affection and solidarity among brothers has decreased and now many times, there are disputes over the state allotted lands among the brothers. The economic orders have changed many characteristics of the joint family system.

9.2.3 Change in Economic Institution

Life in dessert is always simple. Material culture is light and people keep on moving in search of food and fodder for most of the time. Women have a worth mentioning role in the dessert economy, besides she has to care for the children and aged, the livestock and cooking. As social change happens, roles and statuses also change. With agriculture, people become sedentary having a complex material culture with a complex social organization. Cholistan is not an exception. Women in Cholistan have been, traditionally engaged in livestock tending, care for the children and aged and cooking. The daily house hold chores start from milking the sheep, goat and cows. It is followed by churning the curdled milk or whey making and separate butter from it and in processing it into ghee or butter oil.

Agriculture in Cholistan has been introduced and it tends people to become sedentary with new values and norms. This has changed women's status and role as compared to the traditional desert life.

As mentioned, Cholistan has two parts namely, the lesser Cholistan and the greater Cholistan. Forty years back, both parts had the same economy but with passage of time, many changes occurred in the economy of the lesser part particularly its departure towards agriculture and industrialization.

In the greater part, the economy is still nomadic in nature except that some families have acquired lands through the state lands distribution system in the lesser part of the desert and now have become sedentary by settling there.

In the lesser part, some people have got state lands on lease or allotted free of cost from the government. To some extent, irrigation water is made available and agriculture is growing fast. Cotton and wheat are the staple crops bringing economic prosperity to people. At least, some 2,82,241 acres of land has been allotted to 21,961 male allottees³¹⁷ and no female has been included in this distribution. This was revealed when the civil society members belonging to Al-Sadiq Desert Welfare Organisation and Action Aid Pakistan held a joint press conference at Bahawalpur on June, 30th, 2013 reported by *The Express Tribune, July 1st, 2013*. This shows the state's response, intention and attitude towards women in Cholistan. This simply means, a woman cannot keep property and is not allowed to become economically empowered. She can tend cattles but cannot own them. She can milk them but cannot consume the products, also cannot keep the money obtained from its sale. She actively earns money from hard physical labour in the agriculture sector and mostly gets her wages in kinds feeding her children and family members. This kind of wage labour suits more to the males than females. Males keep their money but women are to share their earnings.

³¹⁷ Cholistan Development Authority, Office Record 2013

In the entire Cholistan, there is no concept of inheritance rights of women even among those who have got lands from the government. The practice of sale of women for marriage purpose renders a woman not entitled for inheritance right or dower, a religious responsibility.

Women in Pakistan, participate in different areas to be included in the economic activities of the country. However, it is generally observed that women role in economy in rural Pakistan is confined to agriculture, house work, and cottage industries³¹⁸. Women now actively share the responsibility to participate in all walks of economic activities like agriculture, industrial production, power and gas, work in financial institutions, commerce, hotels, property business, administration, education and health, etc.³¹⁹. The Labour Force Survey of the country shows that only agriculture sector with major statistics to include women's economic contribution.

Other than this, despite the fact that there is urbanization expansion, old fogey customary values are still deeply rooted in the society. Women job is usually temporary as mostly it continues till their marriage. This scenario creates an atmosphere of women's dependency on men and supports the determination of a male oriented patriarchal culture. Women are recognized as mothers, daughter and sisters, but having no right to acquire property and position in society. There are not only the cultural factors, but also the establishment factors which are responsible for women economic conditions. The government has promised to provide equal economic opportunities to both men and women under its constitutional provisions, but the real side of the picture is quite dark. In one way, the government considers women as an unprivileged group, but does not provide any social

³¹⁸Rehana Siddiqui, *Gender and Empowerment: Evidence from Pakistan* (Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, 2006). p.178-9

³¹⁹Ibid.p.2

security for them to uplift their socioeconomic condition. There is an informal *Zakat* system in the country which is insufficient to address women's poverty and deprivation. In Cholistan, there are traditional economic fields for women to participate.

9.2.4 Change in Health Institution

According to the „Economic Survey of Pakistan 2014“, an official report, quoted by the Daily Aaj Peshawar, the total health budget of the federal as well as five provinces and Azad Kashmir state is around 80 billion rupees annually which is about 0.45% of the GDP. This allocation, as per official report is less than most of the countries of the region. It is difficult to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015 with this level of state will for attaining the goals. The report further indicates that there are some 140,000 doctors, 98,000 dentists, 70,000 nurses, less in number than doctor and dentists. In terms of buildings, there are 295 TB treatment centres, 6000, Basic Health Units (BHUs) and Rural Health centres (RHCs). These centres and hospitals have been under staffed as well as lack availability of necessary medicines and equipment. Interestingly, since 2000, the federal as well as the provincial governments have been decreasing the budgetary provision for health as of the GDPs³²⁰.

Pakistan is quite behind in all the socio-economic and health indicators in the SAARC region. Health indicators are dismal. The fertility rate ranges between 3-4 while child mortality has been recorded as 99 per 1,000 live births while the maternal mortality ratio is about 400 per 100,000 live births³²¹.

Amongst the health care facilities, population per doctor was calculated as about 1200, per dentist were about 1900, and per midwife was over 6000 while population per LHV was calculated as a little over 16,800. Antenatal check-ups during pregnancy reported as 14

³²⁰Daily Aaj, Peshawar. Dated Sunday, the 30th Nov.2014.

³²¹Government of Pakistan, "Economic Survey of Pakistan 2007-08 "(Islamabad: Federal Board of Revenue. , 2009). 11

percent only, while birth attended by traditional birth attendants (TBAs) was reported as 46 percent only. Mammographic facilities were available to only 01% of the total population³²².

WHO has given a very lucid description of the health status of women in Pakistan as:

She is illiterate, has 5 children...Work 15 hours a day...children under malnourished. Lives in a 2 room mud house. She undertakes 12-13 activities. She is anaemic. Gives birth to low weight babies...There is a fear of sexual harassment and even rape.Lives in fear of being killed in the name of honour, where there is no law to protect her from domestic violence³²³.

Now turning to Cholistan, an out of sight out of mind area, where the health care system revolves around ethno-medication. In Cholistan, there is no concept of qualified doctor whether male or female. Inhabitants of Cholistan instead of proper medication, resort to home-based remedies. Even during pregnancy and for delivery purpose need of proper medical treatment is not available. Resident of Cholistan have more chances to become a victim of diseases because they drink water from *toba* which remains open for the entire external elements like microorganism and excrement of the animals who also drink from the same place.

In the health sectors as discussed earlier, there are some health facilities like 06 BHUs, one RHC and a few dispensaries for a population of over 400,000-600,000 (The population of Cholistan is a matter of controversy and state apathy. In the CDA record, the population is about 0.155 million but ground surveys by some independent organizations have given a big number³²⁴ means a facility is meant for more than 50,000 population if and when doctors and medicines were available.

As a result of this situation, maternal and child mortality is higher than the rest of the country not only due to the climatic conditions but also of many infections and poverty

³²²Ibid.

³²³World Health Organization, "Social Determinates of Health in Pakistan: The Glass Is More Than Half Empty "(Geneva: WHO, UNO, 2006).11.

³²⁴Khan, Ali, and Anania, "Productivity Constraints of Cholistani Farmers."

related problems like under nourishment and underweight births. Besides all these odds, no official data on the maternal and child mortality is available like the census of population. Births are attended by the TBAs up to the extent of 90% as no LHV or LHW is available at the proper time. In case of any delivery complications, the woman is carried to the nearby urban centre for treatment but mostly, such women expire before getting medical help. Early age marriages also cause many child and maternal deaths but there is no way of how to stop it. Recently in the greater part of Cholistan, mobile health units have been introduced to help people occasionally.

9.2.5 Change in Education Institution

Pakistan is one of the countries in the region with the lowest literacy figures particularly for females. In the SAARC area, Maldives tops the rank with 49 position, India stands at 102, Bangladesh 109, Nepal 110 and Pakistan stands at the bottom at are ranked at 118³²⁵. In Pakistan, the overall literacy rate is 56 percent (for age 15-over) with male literacy at 69 percent and female 44 percent³²⁶.

Gender disparity is observable in all walks of life in the country, including the education. The country has a very poor female literacy rate because of such discrimination. This discrimination is not only on public level, it is also on state level and can be judged from the statistics of the number of schools for girls and boys each. The number of schools for boys is much higher than for girls. Similarly, the no. of male teachers is much higher than female teachers even at primary level³²⁷. The enrolment rate of girls at primary level is not more than 51% which means the rest of half of the girls never went to school. Similarly,

³²⁵United Nations Organization (2009) *Education For All Development Index: UNESCO Global Monitoring Report, 2009*. UNESCO: Islamabad, 2010), p. 12.

³²⁶Government of Pakistan, *Pakistan Social and Living standards Measurement Survey (PSLM Survey)*, 2008-09, (Islamabad: Ministry of economic affairs and Statistics, 2008), p. 16-17.

³²⁷UNESCO, "Why Gender Equality in Pakistan "(Islamabad, Pakistan United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2010). 6.

province wise discrimination also exists in the enrolment rate as in Baluchistan only 32 percent girls attend primary school³²⁸. UN has explained this gender disparity in Pakistan and pointed out several causes which contribute to less access to education by females in Pakistan. These factors include excessive poverty, state will to implement the promise of free and compulsory education for all, nominal budgetary allocation for education, cultural norms, son preference, less number of schools for girls, shortage of female teachers etc³²⁹.

According to V.R.Taneja,

*Education and social change is a two - way traffic. While education preserves, transmits and disseminates the whole culture, social change is the instrument and precondition of educational thought*³³⁰.

When we talk about female education in Cholistan, situation is quite disheartening. Here, there is no concept of even education for the male. To impart education to the female in a nomadic society is perceived as a taboo. Till 1996, 100% males and 100 % females were illiterate³³¹. Even after the establishment of CDA the results are not very much encouraging in this regard. After nearly forty years, the female literacy rate should have been gone above 40 % (a minimum increase of 1 % annually) but till it is less than 20%³³². There is scarcity of educational institutions where females could go for education.

Education in Cholistan has been introduced at the end of the 20th century. Before this, there was no concept of formal education and the informal education consisted of how to take care of the animals in the desert or learn the trade of handicrafts in the family.

At present, 81 primary school buildings (not buildings in common parlance but huts

³²⁸Islamabad: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Statistics Government of Pakistan, "Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (Psml) 2006-07," (2008). 11.

³²⁹United Nations Organization (2010) *Op. Cit*, 17-20.

³³⁰<https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=RELATIONSHIP+BETWEEN+EDUCATION+AND+SOCIETY+AND+SOCIAL+CHANGE&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&rls=o>

³³¹Khan, Ali, and Anania, "Productivity Constraints of Cholistani Farmers."

³³²Face to face communication with literacy coordinator Cholistan Development Authority, Dated April 10, 2013, Time 11:00 AM

made of hay and straws to make oneself safe from sun and winds), 09 middle school buildings, 01 high school building is available but for higher education, one has to give up his traditional nomadic life style³³³.

In lieu of any proper census figures, planning for education and health is not only difficult but impossible also. The CDA sources show the total population as 0.155 million. It was reported by many outsiders that these figures belonged to 1981 census of population and since after then no census has been conducted in the area. As a matter of fact census of population in nomadic societies is nearly impossible due to the frequent movement of the people in search of fodder and water for animals.

The CDA and other NGOs have shown a number of schools as much as 248 (see chapter on education and health) but did not show the average no. of students or the number of drop outs particularly when the grazing season starts as well as the harvesting season of cotton and wheat start where most of the children are put to hard labour.

9.2.7 Woman and Religious Institution

In July, 2010, an Islamabad based organization conducted a survey on the role of religion and its relationship with social development. The survey has explained the pervasive role of religion in Pakistani society thus; Religion has a pervasive effect in Pakistan. Both men and women start learning and practicing religion from the very early childhood. Religion like the culture is the mother's lap where young children listen and watch parents and elder kith and kin practicing religion in the form of recitation of the holy Quran and five times daily prayers. Islamic studies is an important part of the syllabi right away from school to college and university level. Those who can afford, hire the services of religious teachers to teach their children at home. The general sources of such religious teachings are the Mosques and *Madrassas* seminaries where the Quran and prayers are taught in Arabic text.

³³³ Cholistan Development Authority, office record (2013)

Mosques are built with religious zeal nearly in every street and village irrespective of the size of population where *Adhan* (call to five times prayers), Friday's sermons, *Eids* sermons, are delivered on loudspeakers. The use of loudspeakers by the students and teachers of the Madrassas is a common observation in rural as well as urban areas. As a result of the use of loudspeakers, even women are well aware of the religious teachings and practices. Pervasiveness of the religion can be understood from this report:-

*In every day social interaction, individuals are keen to lecture others on how to follow the religion and conform to the injunctions ordained by God, His prophets and religious authorities and leaders. Against this backdrop, one can imagine the extent of influence religion has on people's lives and behaviors*³³⁴.

The same survey reported the sources of learning of religion and say that 25% people learned religion from parents, 6.7% at schools, 5.9% at mosques, 50% at *madrassas* established in the mosques while a very limited number learnt about Islam from personal reading (may be at a very late stage), while 22% reported learning of religion from at least three sources of the above sources. Similarly, when the respondents were asked about the preferred source of learning of Islam, it was revealed that 14.6% preferred to learn from parents, a similar number preferred to learn from prayer leaders/cleric (at mosques), 34% reported learning from religious books, and 80% preferred at least three sources of the above³³⁵.

The hold of religion is tenuous in Cholistan, not only among females but males also. There is no regular system for mosques, religious education, prayers and even funeral prayers on the death of any Muslim which are obligatory about which they did not know in the past. Though women in Islam, are equally responsible in religious matters, still she has some relaxations. In Cholistan, women have been teaching the youngsters religion in the past. If the

³³⁴Muhammad Azam, "Religious Behaviour in Pakistan: Impacts on Social Development "(Islamabad: Paksitan Institute for Peace Studies, 2010). 4-5.

³³⁵Muhammad Azam, "Religious Behaviour in Pakistan: Impacts on Social Development "(Islamabad: Paksitan Institute for Peace Studies, 2010

parents have no orientation about religious education and religious practices, how come they will teach the children? As a result, the religion of a person is by his/her family. It is enough to belong to a Muslim or Hindu family and that is the religious identity of a person. Fasting during the month of *Ramdhan* is not meticulously observed. In summers, though it can be difficult enough but even in winters many people do not know about the holy fasting.

In the absence of real religious knowledge, people were more superstitious than religious and spiritual mentors“*peers* played an important role in their spiritual life forty years back. Some people even did not know the prophet of Islam but knew *Chanan peer*. Now there is a change in the situation. There are mosques in the lesser part. The young generation has the opportunities of learning religion and as a result, superstitiousness is on decline and some women now do not believe in the spiritual mentors.

These indicators show that the Cholistan has made very little development and progress in the fields of health, education and economic empowerment of women. Even religious education which is mostly free, is only available to a little number of people. There is rich literature in the shape of international reports regarding the social policy predicaments in Pakistan which is not needed here to be discussed. Anyway, some developmental activities were there in Cholistan during the last forty years.

10. Chapter-X: Conclusion and Summary

This chapter contains conclusion and summary of the study. It briefly discusses location, methodology, summary of findings and analysis of the study.

10.1 Location of the Study

This study has researched on Cholistan, a widely spread desert area located in two provinces of Pakistan, Sindh and Punjab. Cholistan is situated at latitude $28^{\circ} 15'0''$ N longitude $70^{\circ} 75'$ and $70^{\circ} 45'0''$ E. In its north and west, river Sutlej flows while its south western part is bounded by Thar Desert of Sindh region. Furthermore, in east and south, it is bordering with the Bikaner and Jaisalmer districts of state of Rajasthan, India³³⁶.

Cholistan Desert, situated in the south Punjab of Pakistan, is the second largest desert of the country, a constituent of the the Great Rajistani Indian Desert. Presently, for administrative purposes, Cholistan is divided into three districts of Punjab Pakistan namely Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, and Rahim Yar Khan. The major chunk of the Cholistan desert is under the administrative control of Bahawalpur district which is 40,28,217 acres. It covers an area of 16,000 km² (66, 55,360 acres). Its length is 480 km and width ranges from 32km to 192km. Cholistan has seven union councils (local government units), out of which two union councils do not have human population due to topography. Throughout the Cholistan, human population is scattered and dispersed³³⁷.

The mercury moves between 6 degrees in winters to 50 degree Celcius in summer. Human population of Cholistan is disputed. The CDA sources show that the population of Cholistan is comprised of 1,55,000 persons whereas independent sources reports it range

³³⁶M.Akram and W.A.Khan . (1995). Desertification Status in the Cholistan Desert.Proceedings of the sixth all Pakistan Geographical Conference 1993" (Islamia University Bahawalpur Department of geography.Conference Proceedings, 14.

³³⁷ Ibid.

between 400,000-600,000 people. Similarly, the livestock population is also contested.

The CDA reported the population of livestock is about 13,18, 000³³⁸.

The present day Cholistan is a remnant of the Hakra civilization (Hakra River) known to archaeologists as an oldest civilization. The people of Cholistan live a semi -nomadic life who move in search of food and fodder for themselves and their animals. The area converted into the desert on the drying up of river Hakra but another change is eminent as the area is being irrigated through an extensive canal system from river Sutlej. But the living style and the mud-straw residences portrays that the locals are still living in a 2000 years back era³³⁹.

After conducting this ethnographic study on Cholistan, a desert in Pakistan, I am left with an assortment of both pleasure and sorrow. Pleasure in the sense of breaking this myth that deserts engulf the lands and desertification continues making life miserable for the dwellers but the present study is a good living example that with the help of little efforts, desert life can be changed into a settled urban life with many facilities of modern life like drinking water, education, health facilities, modern economies rather than desert economies and so on.

Cholistan, which was once considered as a formidable desert void of many necessities of life, now its many areas have agricultural and farming, with sedentary life style. In lesser Cholistan area, there are now schools and hospitals, roads and bridges, livestock tending on commercial level improving the life standard of the locals and so on. This model of desert development can be replicated anywhere in the world.

The sad aspect of the research work is that women are still treated worst like the proverbial saying „*women; thy name is frailty*“. She is still in the grip of the shackles of the harsh culture; which do not allow her to ask for her health even if dying of treatable ailment.

³³⁸Cholistan Development Authority, Office Record 2013.

³³⁹Mughal, M. R. Ancient Cholistan: archaeology and architecture: (Ferozsons publishers, Lahore. (1997). P.23.

She is not allowed to own any material wealth to utilize it on hers self; she is not allowed to seek knowledge in a Muslim society where education and knowledge are mandatory for each man and woman; she is not allowed to keep and possess any property because she is dependent on men. She is subjected to all kinds of violence and harsh treatment. She is better off when a child but when she grows, she is used to all kind of injustices and maltreatment. When becoming a mother, she is not allowed to ask for a trained medical attendant. When in pain, she is put off with ordinary analgesic or homemade remedies.

But she is put to hard and harsh physical labour like tending cattles and animals. She has to look after the ailing men and women but her drudgery is not recognized. The words of the Government of Pakistan seem true when the state says about the women status that;

*Bought and sold, beaten and mutilated, even killed with impunity and social approval, dispossessed and disinherited despite legal safeguards*³⁴⁰.

Women status can be judged from her over burdened life style as Pakistani women whether rural or urban, live a poor and illiterate life with physical hardships. They work for long hours of domestic chores which is neither recognized nor paid for. Child bearing and domestic labour is their responsibility. Under the present social circumstances, women are the first to wake up and the last to go to bed. Their work includes lighting fire, offer their prayers, milking the cows and buffallows, make the breakfast, and clean the entire house and the dishes littered. Her duties continue till next evening and she is the one to look after the aged, the sick, the livestock, she has to collect firewood and fetch drinking water, look after the children, and after all, she has to make preparation for the next day and then go to her bed³⁴¹.

Cholistan used to be fertile and lush green region when river *Hakra* flowed in this area. With the passage of time, river changed its course leaving Cholistan a desert and

³⁴⁰Government of Pakistan, "Women Status in Pakistan ".2.

³⁴¹Shaheed and Mumtaz, "Women in Pakistan: Two Steps Forward One Step Back."21-2.

barren area. Saraiki is the language of the Cholistan. Based on the topography, Cholistan is divided into lesser and greater Cholistan. There is a semi-autonomous body Cholistan Development Authority (CDA) for its administrations and carrying out various developmental projects to accelerate the pace of developmental works.

Life in dessert is always simple. Material culture is light and people can move in search of food and fodder easily .There is nomadic life style in the Cholistan due to scarcity of water for human and livestock drinking. Underground water is brackish, so not suitable for drinking and irrigation purposes. In the month of April, water sources start to get dry and people tend to migrate in search of water and forage for animals. Usually, they return to the desert areas in the month of July with the first rainfall. Survival of human, animals and plants depend on rain. Cholistan is a drought prone area due to poor quality of underground water and limited supply through artificial means. Rain water is stored into *toba* and *kund* for future use. Life revolves around livestock and their care. Livestock serves both as a source of income and supplementing food requirements.

Migration is salient feature of life in Cholistan. In the dry season, both human and animal population migrates in search of water. People living in greater Cholistan migrate within Cholistan and to the settled and semi settled areas with their animal herds. They live in temporary shelters for 4-5 months and earn livelihood by selling dairy products and working as labourers in agriculture farms. With start of rainfall in Cholistan, they return to their *toba* and graze animals over free pastures.

In desert area, *ghopa* is prepared for living. A *ghopa* is basic living unit and is used as shelter from weather conditions and storage of their household goods. All the *ghopa* are situated beside or at distance of few hundred meters from the *toba*. Maximum number of *ghopa* at one place is 25-30 and minimum number is 7-10. The *toba* is considered to be property and ownership of the clan who constructed and care for it. In the dry season, if any

toba has still water or in case, there is rain in one part, then other clans can come for water with the prior permission of the *toba* owner clan. In the greater Cholistan, there is no boundary wall around *ghopa*. A fence of small wooden branches is used as a sign of demarcation where there is cluster of *ghopa*.

In the greater Cholistan, due to scarcity of water, bath taking and changing clothes is generally fortnightly or when they feel the need to do so. After washing, clothes are being folded and buried in the sand. It sucks water leaving the clothes dry, folding serves as ironing. Likewise, daily utensils are not washed with water, practice is that after eating, they pour some sand in the pot and make it clean by rubbing.

Cholistani dress for female is *Ghagra Qamez and Dopata*. *Ghagra* is a long skirt. It is common thought that women of Cholistan always wear embroidered *Kurti* shirt and bangles in her full arm but this is not reality. Actually this is worn by women of some specific Hindu tribe called *Meghwal*. Men put on *Qameez* and *Dhoti* with turban for elderly and *safa* for youngsters. Women especially in lesser Cholistan have started wearing *Qameez Shalwar*.

Jewelry wearing is very popular in Cholistan and has special importance in the social life of local people. Women have worn different jewelry items casually. In the early years of a baby girl, nose and ears are pierced by elderly women and at least a nose pin is put. There are number of ornaments worn by Cholistani women such as *popa* (nose gay), *katmala* (necklace), *bali* (ear ring), *nath* (nose ring), *kangan* (bangles), *pazeb* (anklet) *bula*, *potriyan*, *chandanhar*, *taveetrian* and *chilki etc.*

In Cholistan, mobiles phone have become common for communication and contact. Mobile phone have replaced very important tool for entertainment and current affairs of past called Radio. But female do not have direct possession of neither radio nor mobile. Elderly women can easily demand from their sons to contact any relative but girls cannot

freely access mobiles. Radio and mobiles are being used which are mostly possessed and operated by males. In a village in some households, where DVD player or dish antenna is available, becomes little cinema house. Some male children and adult male elders go there for watching mostly movies. But female are not allowed to go at such places.

Diet in Cholistan consist of bread, milk, meat and butter fat. Grains like wheat and barley are collected as major source of diet for the whole year. Milk is obtained from cows, camels, goats and sheep. The milk is churned and whey and butterfat are obtained which is important part of diet in Cholistan. Animals like goats, sheep and cows and chicken are slaughtered for getting meat. Local shrubs are also cooked as a vegetable and new ternd in lesser Cholistan is cooking vegetables as part of daily food.

In this age of faster means of communication and transportation, people in Cholistan cover several miles by foot because they do not have such facilities such as roads and auto vehicles. Severe weather conditions, hostile geographic conditions coupled with poverty has made it difficult for dwellers of Cholistan to travel from one place to another even in case of urgent medical treatment. Motor bikes are getting place as a source of transportation but in greater part but it is difficult to manage its fuel.

This study is ethnographic description of Cholistan where social life is not fully known to the external world especially that of women. Social institutions and their functions have been studied along with roles and statuses of women. Life of an individual revolves around social institutions such as marriage, economic, religion, health and education. I have studied the change which has occurred in the women's roles and statuses in these institutions in last four decades. By employing ethno-methodology, data has been collected through qualitative protracted interview and participant's observation. Elderly women were interviewed and participated in daily life activities and

ceremonies. Furthermore to achieve target of relevant information from field, techniques like observation, interviewing and content analysis was used.

As mentioned earlier that this study has explored functions of social institutions in desert and roles and statuses and change over the last forty years. Here is brief description of family, marriage, religion, economy, education and health as institutions in Cholistan.

10.2 Marriage

Nearly all marriages are arranged and it is not the matter of the choice of the bride or groom to show their willingness or otherwise. It is the prerogative of the family heads of both sides (bride and groom) to decide when and with whom the marriage will take place. It is quite an informal decision made by the elder male members of the family, the village headman (*numberdar*) and the clan members (males only). Now a days, women (mother of the boy and girl or mother of the male who decides the marriage between the youngers) are at least informed if not asked about their opinion, a change that has occurred recently in the Cholistan.

As for as the types and modes of marriage are concerned, among both Hindus and Muslims marriages are mostly endogamous and patrilocal. Recently, the trend of exogamy has also emerged. The most common mode of marriage is by exchange, or by purchasing the bride by price. The exchange mode of marriage is so important that if no exchange is found for a girl, she remains unmarried for the rest of her life while in some cases.

In case, if no exchange of girls is possible, the other way to seek a wife for a boy is to get a bride by purchase, may be from out of the clan/ village. And if the family did not have enough money to pay the bride price, this becomes the responsibility of the entire *beradari* or clan/ joint family to contribute towards the amount fixed for purchasing. This is known as *Phori*. Mostly, they prefer to promise it by any particular women or any pregnant women. Sometimes, relative gave their daughter for proposal and sometime they promise

that when this girl after marriage will give birth to a daughter, she will be given back in exchange.

For the decision of marriage, the most important factor is availability of proposal for exchange and compatibility of couple is out of question in Cholistan. They arrange marriage of young girls with older men; cases of father's marriages in exchange of their daughters are also observed in Cholistan. Marriages are often fixed right after the birth of their child or in childhood of their children and after puberty, marriages are arranged. 14 to 17 years is maximum age for marriage for most of the girls in Cholistan.

Followers of Hindu religion celebrate marriages of their girl child in early childhood. After a formal marriage ceremony, the bride is taken to the groom house and she has to stay there for some time as a guest and then comes back to her parent's home. On attaining puberty, she is returned to her husband's family permanently with further little celebrations.

Male children are preferred over female children. Lack of a male child, can even lead to polygamy which is considered bad as well as immoral practice and local people only go for second marriage mostly when, either, they are issueless or when they have only daughters and desire for a male child.

10.3 Family

Family as an institution in Cholistan is performing multiple functions for supporting its members at each and every phase of life from birth to death. In the nomadic culture of Cholistan, religion, caste, clan, social status, social identity and association with certain occupation, all comes from family. Family is fulfilling all the human needs such as food, sex, economic support, sense of protection and health facilities.

In Cholistan, joint and extended family systems are adopted because of the climatic, economic and geographic factors. Survival is not possible in nuclear family system as many

people mutually fulfil each other's needs. In the absence of institutional and technological services in the desert area, family members provides every possible services for an individual, hence life in Cholistan, all the activities of an individual revolves around family throughout life.

Just like generally found in Pakistan, family head is always an elderly man in Cholistan who has strong grip on the all the matters related to a family. So, decisions making about family matters like about livestock, migration, social contacts, marriages and all other lie with him. All the members of the family obey the orders of head that results into strong family unit.

Marriage is amongst the most important functions of family for its member in Cholistan. Family not only arranges for proposals but also makes all the arrangements. After marriage family keeps on supporting economically meeting all the needs of married couple.

Likewise another important function of family is economic support of its member. In the Cholistan, where there is no other institution for economic support of the individual, family takes this responsibility throughout life. It is a give and take system; in the childhood family takes care while in the later life individual pays back to the family.

Women have least say in the decision making of family. Her life is divided between roles and responsibilities. With her different statuses like as daughter, wife, daughter in law, mother and grandmother, she has significant roles in the family. She has to perform many indoor and outdoor roles such as cooking, collecting wooden fuel, fetching water, caring for children taking care of live stocks, milking them and preparing butter. But her lot of contribution does not appear in the form of reward for her, that is why she has secondary importance in the family.

Presently, there is decline in the love and affection on the part of family members

for each other, similarly decision making has shifted within family instead of clan and village headman. Nuclear family system is gradually replacing joint family system in lesser Cholistan which is outcome of materialistic thinking and self dependency on the part of family members. In the past, there was also joint and extended family system but with the change in economic status and awareness level, now married couple tend to live independently and want to make their own decisions. Status of women is witnessing a bit change in wake of increase in awareness, literacy rate and interaction with settled areas.

10.4 Religion

Religion gives a social identity to its followers in Cholistan that is why, people proudly tell about their religion. People in Cholistan have deep faith in religion although they do not have direct and authentic source of knowledge due to unavailability of any channel of information like media and interaction with religious clergy. Here, religious personalities are more worshipped than beliefs. Spiritual mentor has a sound social status and considered authority on religious matters. Cholistanis highly respect spiritual mentor but do not preach religious obligations like saying prayer, giving *Zakat* and fasting in Ramadan. Another example is that they establish mosques but do not offer prayers. *Eid-ul-Azaha* , *Eid- ul-Fitr* and *Chanan peer* fair are popular religious festivals.

Religion is not limited to satisfying only spiritual needs but it also has social roles in Cholistan such as in the absence of formal justice system, religion plays important role in settlement of disputes. In minor conflicts, accused one is asked to swear on holy Quran publically, in case of doing so, he is considered innocent otherwise held responsible for charges against him, but when there is serious dispute, accused party requests *peer* for intervention and setting the problem. No one denies the words of spiritual mentor; anybody who does not accept such solution is socially stigmatized and considered misfortune.

Women were less practicing of religion because of their poor knowledge about beliefs and practices. It is because they do not have any direct interaction with source of religious knowledge. They are not supposed to raise cross question on any of the belief or practice. They have to believe in the same what their father or husband say. They blindly follow everything which they came to know on the name of religion. Better social status for those women who could read holy Quran shows importance of religion for local people.

Presently trend of blindly following of spiritual mentor is decreasing, so is why people do offer less gifts to him. Similarly, people in lesser Cholistan tend to go to formal justice system like police and courts. This change is result of increasing trend of education and social awareness as result of change. Religion also plays an important role in strengthening coherence. All the devotees of one *peer* are strongly connected to each other with immense respect and regard. Similarly, *Chanan peer* fair is the biggest gathering of people in Cholistan which shows that religious mentors are source of strengthening unity within Cholistan.

People in Cholistan make vows to *Chanan peer* and gift animals to the guardians of shrine upon fulfilling the wishes. The fair or carnival is celebrated for seven Thursdays consecutively and both Hindus and Muslims celebrate it equally. Most devotees saty at the site for five week.

10.5 Health

In Cholistan, due to nomadic life style and lack of health and hygiene awareness, there is no concept of preventive measures; only curative measures are adopted for getting rid of disease. General health and hygiene care does not seem as an issue for people who share open water source *toba* with the animals. Getting healthy after ailment is considered a matter of fate. God is healer for them and this contentment has reduced effort for treatment.

People who cannot access any health facility depend on nature and contentment helps them to bear health related pains and problems.

People go for amulet, some holy reading on water or to *peer* in Cholistan. It means that they have some desire of treatment in case of ailment but firstly they search for solution within their environment. Their helplessness to reach any health facility makes them to believe in superstitions as alternative of treatment. Amulet is used for both prevention and cure for disease for them. Usage of amulet as cure and prevention from diseases despite consultation with doctor shows firm belief in amulet effects than medical treatment.

Similarly, in both parts of Cholistan, boiled milk and different shrubs were given as a remedy for various health problems. This practice is still continued in the greater Cholistan but in lesser, now they also use medicine for relief. Men bring medicine for common diseases like headache, fever, cough and diarrhoea etc from the cities and used when fell ill. This shift in treatment mode shows that this increased awareness has made people to adopt modern medical treatment method.

Female role to prepare homemade remedies and ethno medication is more significant than the men. Elderly women are aware about the utility of basic shrubs; they prepare these medicines and take care of patient. In greater Cholistan, source of transportation for carrying the patients, in case of serious ailment, are obsolete and they hardly find any conveyance for this purpose. In some areas which are adjacent to the track, could find Ranger truck but there is no schedule, so, it is only matter of luck if they do pass and carry the patient to nearby settlements.

For female diseases, elderly women are thought as the experts. Common health problems are cured by elderly women by their suggested advices like taking hot milk or tea in fever and headache. They take women problems as routine matter, for example, even for childbirth, they call the elderly women. Elderly women thinks that now, younger females

pretend and make this issue of child birth, a problem which is natural. Demand of extra care or medical treatment is criticized by other women. This shows that women folk themselves creates cultural restrictions for themselves.

People in Cholistan believe that ALLAH Himself cures the disease and human efforts are not needed. This belief and contentment is outcome of helplessness in finding any medical treatment. The same belief was prevailing in lesser Cholistan in the past but now, when they have some health facilities, they go to the doctor for treatment of health problems in severe cases instead of religious leaders, *peers* or otherwise.

10.6 Economy

In the given geographic and climatic conditions, economy in Cholistan is largely dependent on livestock. Every household has herds of cows, sheep, goats and camels. People sell dairy products such milk, butter, and wool for purchasing household necessities. Underground water is brackish and at deeper level from ground surface, that is why cultivation and agro-farming is not possible. There is cultivation on small scale subject to the availability of irrigation water and rainfall. Another reason of growing trend of cultivation is working as labourer in the fields of settled areas farmers which is source of motivation and inspiration for growing crops. People of Cholistan are neither educated and literate nor skilled to earn money for their needs. In lieu of geographic conditions, animal husbandry is the only occupation suitable to be adopted in Cholistan.

Traditionally, there are some families engaged in cottage industry and handicrafts such as knitting carpets, rugs, fine clothes, *chunri*, *khes*, *lungi*, leaf plates *khusa* making and pottery. People do not receive true return of their hard work and skill due to lack of their direct access to markets. Due to nomadic culture and simplicity of life, people are fearful and hesitant to sell their handicrafts in the market to the exact buyers where they can get

reasonable price of their products. Middle men take advantage of their limitations and get larger profit. Presently these crafts are decreasing from the area.

In the lesser Cholistan, there are some opportunities of income like with improvements in roads and pathways infrastructures to *tobas*, milk and other dairy products are sold at good price. Lesser Cholistan is adjacent to settled areas where there is cultivation, so men and women work as wage labourers in wheat harvesting and cotton picking seasons.

As there are too few opportunities of income generation, so life is simple with few things needed to be purchased with money. In greater Cholistan, hardly people consume anything in daily life that needs to be bought with money. Dietary needs are fulfilled from local products like wheat and barley, milk and meat.

Words of some researchers in Cholistan reflect the economic conditions and opportunities in Cholistan.

*In Cholistan desert most of the nomads live below poverty line in the absence of basic human needs like clean drinking water or sufficient food, health and education for their children. Livestock breeding, improvement of performance or range management is not practiced scientifically*³⁴².
Women are playing multifaceted roles in economic activities.

They care for livestock and participate in agricultural activities but they cannot be direct beneficiaries. Patriarchal family system and cultural restrictions on women interaction with unknown men have limited them to physical work and deprived from right of getting cash by them. Women participation in economic activities is supposed to be there by-birth duty without the right of claiming direct benefits.

³⁴²Mariam Abbas Soharwardi, Karamat Ali, and Jamal Abdul Nasir, "Econometric Analysis of Income of Nomads in Irrigated Areas of Cholistan Desert," *International Journal of Physical and Social Sciences* 2, no. 1 (2012).

10.7 Education

In the desert areas, survival is first priority for the people. Education is not beneficial for them in the economic perspective. Rather an illiterate person can do animal husbandry better than an educated person who does not want to go for grazing. Formal education is not suitable for people living in Cholistan due to harshness of environment and constant migration in search of water and fodder.

It was introduced by CDA in eighties / nineties of last the century. Before this, they just have little orientation of religious rituals passed by generations. They learned skills required for survival by their elders. Education is dependent on awareness of particular clan family caste. In Cholistan, now there are a few formal educational institutions and due to lack of awareness about importance of education for development of personality, concept of education is limited firstly to reading holy Quran and memorizing prayers which is not taught in these schools. Secondly comes learning prevailing culture and norms practiced by elders and other related skills which are necessary for survival in desert. In the context of Cholistan, education does not seem important socially and economically. Their life pattern seems having no requirement for education. Similarly grazing herds over natural pastures also do not require any formal education. It would not be out of place to say that illiterate person can do this job better than educated one.

In the past, people were even not familiar with the concept of formal education system and so youngsters unconsciously learnt from elderly family members and environment in informal way. Youngsters are made to learn about what to do and how to do in the daily life. Cholistan, with traditional patriarchy system of household is a living example. Lack of social awareness and local cultural values restrict the mobility of females

for meeting basic needs of life including education. A blend of all these forces plays an important role in keeping female folk away from formal education

As there is limited formal education system in Cholistan, therefore, this condition has increased the responsibilities of women to contribute in imparting informal education to their children. In Cholistan there are many informal skills which are integral part of economic life of Cholistan and these skills serve as tool for survival of people in Cholistan. From years after year, females are transmitting these skills from generation to generation. These skills include; how to prepare *Ghopa*, how to collect wood fuel to cook food, how to collect and store goods of daily usage and how to do embroidery, how to get and preserve water and how to manage life in scarcity of water. In past, hardly there could be found an educated person in greater Cholistan and if there was someone educated or even literate, it was just an exception. Mothers educate young girls about their customs, traditions and behaviours.

Trend of educating children is getting place in lesser Cholistan because of availability of schools and increased awareness about socioeconomic importance of education. Larger part of Cholistan known as greater Cholistan is still deprived of educational facilities.

These words of Shirazi, a visitor to Cholistan speak volume about deprivation of basic facilities in Cholistan. An old man said;

*All sorts of people (geologists, naturalists, archaeologists, travellers and hunters) are welcome here but nobody brings dams, roads, power lines, televisions and schools for our children from the mainland*³⁴³.

I come up with last word that social change is inevitable and constant phenomenon in society. Over the past forty years, there have been changes in roles and statues of women in the Cholistan desert. Although there is lack of basic facilities of life such as schools,

³⁴³ Shirazi, "Changing Cholsitan ". <http://www.chowrangi.pk/changing-cholistan.html>

hospitals, roads and electronic or print media but yet change has occurred as a result of their rare interaction is outer world.

10.8 The Changing Roles of Women in Cholistan

Over the last forty years or so, roles of women have changed due to change in socio economic conditions in Cholistan. Here is description of the change in roles and statuses of women in the social institutions.

10.8.1 Family and Marriages

We have said that Cholistan has two parts namely greater and lesser Cholistan. In greater Cholistan the family structure is still joint and extended, patriarchal and patrilineal. Woman has a secondary position in this family system. She is not allowed to decide even her fate and cannot say her choice in her marriage matters even like most of the Muslim societies.

In the lesser part, there is a bit difference in the roles of women as compared to their past. Now, some education is there and her role has changed significantly. Girls go to schools and even colleges. As a result of the education, their attitude and outlook towards life has changed tremendously. Due to increase in interaction with the outer world, they have started adopting fashions like dresses and sun glasses. Currently few people have started to consider proposal compatibility for their daughters. In few cases, now sisters and daughters can sit equal to their brothers and father. Although women face more physical violence in lesser Cholistan due to producing counter arguments but on the other side, verbal interference reflects the strengthening of their opinion.

10.8.2 Economy and Women Role

In this study, an effort has been made for explanation of the social and economic setup of life of women of Cholistan and how this change occurred and affected the socio-economic condition of women of Cholistan. The extensive use of golden and silver ornaments by women is the main saving method of the families. It looks like that as there is

no permanent abode of these people and they keep on move in search of food and fodder for them and their cattles, they have no safe places to securely keep their wealth and thus use their earning to have ornaments. But this does not mean women become the owners. It is the sweet will of the men when to use these gold and silver for purposes other than women use. Trend of jewelary is descreasing due to cut on saving, its because of increase in expenditure.

The maximum change has occurred in lesser Cholistan. As a result of the improvement and changes in the communication facilities, now few men go to the other areas for jobs and the habit of home sickness has faded away as there are many economic opportunities for men away from their homes. Women, who look after the families in the absence of their males, keep the money for domestic consumption and children education. In the lesser part, previously, she was seldom allowed to go to participate in economic activities except tending the cattles, milking them and selling the milk, work on handicrafts at home. Now, she frequently goes to participate in the agriculture labour and earn the livelihood for the family. Few women from migrated Cholistan families have joined the government services in the urban areas after seeking education and this like situation is becoming a role model for many young women. It was learnt that many young women have become school teachers and earn regular income. She is not owner of the land and cannot administer her wealth in terms of animals and jewelary with her own will.

In case of greater Cholistan, the economic condition of women is the same as it was forty years back and there is no concept of economic empowerment of women in both parts of the desert. She still looks after the children, the aged, the herds and cattles at home. She has no chance of travelling outside the desert in search of economic activities. She is illiterate and lives like illiterate women with no awareness of her rights as a human being.

10.8.3 Role of Women in Health Care System

In greater Cholistan, people still use the herbal medicines to the maximum due to non-

availability of modern health facilities. Though, over the counter medicines for pains and fevers are available easily everywhere, have decreased the dependence on ethno medication. For most of the ailments, the greater Cholistan people still depend upon the indigenous beliefs and practices of health care system. A woman still attends the births in nearly all deliveries due to deficiency of trained health personnel.

In the lesser part, health care has changed and so the role of women. Now, there are a few health facilities available in the shape of BHUs and dispensaries. Sometimes, medical personnel and medicines are made available. The LHVs and LHWs are now known to many young women and they can seek help from them even privately, if needed. The traditional role of elderly woman in attending the births and deliveries is now on decline. People are now mostly, aware of the modern medicines and keep them in houses to use in emergencies instead of depending upon elderly women to prepare for them the herbal medicines.

The state sponsored health facilities, though, are meagre and mostly, inefficient and insufficient, have brought a change in the awareness level which is the most important aspect of the social change in the field of health care system.

10.8.4 Education and Role of Women

We have said that education in the desert life has little meaning because informal education is more suitable to enable for living in the desert. The establishment of CDA and the opening of schools for the children have now made a dent in the outlook. More boys attend schools than girls but this situation has also brought a practical change in the lesser part of the desert. Many people have realized the importance of education and have left the desert and settled in the urban areas to educate their children for a better future. Not only male children, female children are also being given importance in this sense.

The education has made the role of woman changed to some extent. Not only young women themselves get education in the available meagre opportunity structure but also

elderly women help the young generation to seek knowledge. Although, average number of girls in schools is lesser than average number of boys in schools in Cholistan, but there are cases when educated girls and young women have joined services as school teachers in the area as well as outside Cholistan. These girls belong to the families who permanently migrated from Cholistan. There was a time when grandmother used to teach only cultural lessons to the youngsters, now mothers are doing this job. There are families who have migrated out of the lesser part of the desert to the urban areas not only in search of earning a livelihood but also in search of educating their children in the hope of a better future. As a result, the role of women has increased. Previously, those mothers who used to awake the children to drive the herds into the desert: now awake them and prepare them for schooling. Keeping the children tidy and clean, providing them with books and other academic necessities is also the headache of women.

10.8.5 Religion and Women Role

We have discussed the hold of religion in the desert is quite tenuous. It is not only among the men, also among the women. Men are more responsible in terms of religious obligations in an Islamic society but the case is opposite in Cholistan. Traditionally, the grand mothers or other elderly women have been teaching religion to the young kids in lieu of any religious seminary or proper regular mosque and presence of a religious teacher or a person who can lead the daily five times prayers. As a result, the young generations have been moving away from religious practices for centuries and today, religion in the desert is just like something a familial identification. If a family is Muslim, it is enough for the children to be known as Muslim and vice versa. There has been no system of organizing the prayers, arrangements of fasting during the month of *Ramadhan* in the desert, no arrangements for calling to the mosque and so on. As a result, the practice of religion is very weak. There has been no practice of fasting particularly during the summers in the desert.

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Interview Guide



The Changing Roles and Status of Women of Cholistan, Pakistan

Demographic Profile

Name of Respondent _____ Caste _____

Age _____ Religion _____ Marital Status _____

Name of toba/ name of Village _____

Area of Cholistan _____ Lesser/Greater Cholistan

Name of U.C _____ District _____

Date of interview _____ Time From _____ To _____

1. Ethnographic Description

Shelter/*ghopa* forty years back and presently/ Nature/structure of home (number of rooms, boundary wall, toilet and bath) presently and forty years back

Nature of living forty years back and presently

Life style forty years back and presently

Sources of water forty years back and presently

Trends and practices of migration forty years back and presently

Dietary patterns forty years back and presently

Dressing, forty years back and presently

Jewelry forty years back and presently

Animal husbandry in Cholistan forty years back and presently

Social organization in Cholistan forty years back and presently

2. Family

Family system forty years back and presently

Role of family in giving social support to its members forty years back and presently

Role of family in maintaining life in Cholistan (Food, shelter, education, health, economy etc) of children forty years back and presently

Role and status of mother forty years back and presently

Role and status of daughter forty years back and presently

Role and status of sister forty years back and presently

Role and status of wife forty years back and presently

Role and status of grandmother forty years back and presently

3. Marriage

Marriage system and types in Cholistan forty years back and presently

Age of marriage forty years back and presently

Decision making about marriage forty years back and presently

Marriage celebration and ceremonies forty years back and presently

Couple compatibility/caste/clan for marriage forty years back and present

Trends and practices about dowry forty years back and presently

Practice of re-marriage, conditions for acceptance of re-marriage in the past and presently

Role of marriage in women life symbolical reflection forty years back and presently

Divorce and widowhood forty years back and presently

4. Education

Educational facilities forty years back and presently

Perception about advantages of education forty years back and presently

Trend of sending children for education forty years back and presently

Perceptions of parents/elders about girl's education forty years back and presently

Nature and type of education forty years back and presently

Role of women in imparting education to younger ones forty years back and presently

Problems in education forty years back and presently

4. Health

Awareness about health and hygiene forty years back and presently

Health facilities forty years back and presently

Utilization of health facilities forty years back and presently

Mode of treatment forty years back and presently

Role of women in caring for patients forty years back and presently

Medical/reproductive care for women forty years back and presently

Superstitions (amulet, holy reading) and treatment of diseases forty years back and

presently Role of women in maintaining hygiene and health forty years back and presently

5. Economy

Sources of income/earning currently and forty years back

Nature and type of assets forty year back and presently (Land and property)

Role of women in economic activities forty years back and presently

Recognition of women role in economic activities forty years back and presently

Nature of work done by women forty years back and presently

Nature of problem faced by women contributing in economic activities forty years back and presently

7. Religion

Awareness and knowledge about religion forty years back and presently

Consciousness about identification of religion forty years back and presently

Religious/sacred places forty years back and presently (Mosque & shrines)

Roles of women in imparting religious education forty years back and presently

Role of religion in daily life forty years back and presently

Roles and status of religious mentors forty years back and presently

Religious festivals/celebrations forty years back and presently

Religious beliefs forty years back and presently (superstitions)

Religious practices among women forty years back and presently