



**RECLAIMING SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH TRADITIONAL EMBROIDERY- A
CASE STUDY OF WOMEN EMBELLISHERS IN BALOCHISTAN, PAKISTAN**

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ABSTRACT

The study carried out tends to analyze district Quetta as case study towards understanding dynamics concerning local women with a gradual change on social aspects based on the skills they may employ at traditional embroidery to reorganize their traditional strength reducing economic dependency for better social inclusion. Access to education, communication and inter-linkages through various social/ communication facilities has helped shape environment thoroughly conducive for the likelihood to initiate their role in society with new social status or image along with loud message for the male counter parts to accept women with different approach towards participation as was considered some decades earlier despite being surrounded by tribal male dominated society that used to be rigid for any change for this very purpose. As per the nature of the study quantitative research approached were adopted for the study. Snowball sampling was used for collecting the primary data from the targeted populations. The data were analyzed by using the statistical approaches.

The result of the study revealed that, apart from social constraints economic factors too contributed including poor purchasing power effecting choice reflected on decisions as well for factors of production and expensed assumed to be incurred while streamlining the process flow until final earning for women. Furthermore, they are exploited in rural communities and extremely vulnerable to the poverty incidence lacking input factors, social restriction on mobility and access to market linkages including gender based discrimination.

Keywords: Traditional embroidery, economic dependency, social inclusion, purchasing power, Input factors, process flow, market linkages

INTRODUCTION

The issues pertaining to socio-economic domain for women in less developed or developing economies has always been in focus to unsolved mystery deliberately to retain the long accompanied tradition of male dominance and lust for rule that results in degradation of female under a series of depressed events and lack of ability to effect the decision making body in society, hence no inclusion but a mere entity of society

1. Social Issues:

- Class differences
- Population bomb
- Literacy & gender inequalities
- Cultural restrictions
- Miss interpretation of laws & Norms
- Mobility constraints
- Rigid norms & Violence as acceptable
- Deliberate Malnutrition
- Health Issues

fixed to contribute for limited life cycle of producing and nourishing babies. Along with the Perth of having skills in traditional skills of embroidery as the only source of economic generating activity but that too though associated with several restrictions further limitation towards partition on both micro and macro level. Few of the issues in common for women of deprived communities may be reproduced as below.

2. Economic Issues:

- Lack of access to finance
- Lack of business opportunities
- Hurdle in linkages
- Extreme Pre-existing poverty
- Exploitation by middle man
- Captured markets
- Loss in business and vulnerability to observe such shocks
- Limited exploitation of endowed means

Embellishment as prominent source of entrepreneurship for women in radical developing society has been observed empowering women that helps them gain economic independency for enhanced inclusion in social strata through acquiring

education & professional training. Further pushing it to an extent through behavioral change as personal choice where such persistent efforts increases for them sustainable stability along with equally shared responsibility or identified/accepted

recognition. These entrepreneurs though controversial in various theories accepted based on international definitions are characterized in three major types depending on endowed means i.e. *Chance*-having no clear goal to initiate business but a relatively favorable environment, *Forced*- initiating business in isolated environment and *Created*-engagement or promotion of business idea in practice by the learned ones. (Anjum, 2012). A well-known commentator Parson argue for global sea change in preferences , values & attitude for absorption capacity for adaptation of modernization, acceptance for change in terms of materialist and technological advancement with reference to acceptance for universalism. Such provisions may also allow space for women to adopt for values that are feasibly conducive to their economic generating activities outside the boundary wall of their homes with shared egalitarian contribution to engage. (Afza, 2009)

With no apparent solutions to given issues from concerned stakeholders, beam of hope still exists in terms of gradual social evolution of society in general along with enhancement of literate circles with in women that has now apparently been trying to neutralize such radical behaviors. Participation of women in national

competitive labor force has significantly emerged in recent decades in Asian states including less developed economies like India, Bangladesh & Pakistan and some parts of Africa though low in degree as compared to women entrepreneurs in developed and liberal parts of the world. (EVAN, 2000). With estimated around 70% of the world total population resides in rural or slum areas reflecting mass number approximately 41% living below poverty line defined as standard definition affected by various local social, economic, cultural and political factors (Gupta, 2007).

Pakistan with sound policy and vision for women rights and safeguard in its execution faces numerous political, social and religious challenges where it's exploited by misinterpretation to protect vested interests with adverse repercussions in terms of its implementation due lack of understanding & knowledge for its true strength. Whereas gender inequality & norms concerning violence as acceptable are assumed by commentators as key factors to be combated for equal development across both genders. Statistics on women violence and discrimination has raised to alarming situation in host areas where socio-biological differences are overburdened on women needs to be properly advocated and be aware

of sanctioned in religion and states legislation within local communities that must result in reduction & sharing in workload, presentation & participation in economic activities, Social inclusion, access to institution with free mobility & decision making (BIBI, 2011).

Balochistan as one of the deprived geographical area hold 44% landscape of the country with vital strategic importance & naturally enriched possess 5% of human resource of total having 18.3% male & 7% female literacy (Shujaat, July 2015) faces the worst of poverty in comparison, careful analysis reveals 51% living below poverty line, 2% of rural household as non-poor, 17% as ultra-poor, 26% marked as poor, 25% having access to electricity where almost 3rd quarter of their earning is spend on food consumption keeping other basic needs and mandatory elements of life vulnerable that ultimately affects women to meet the challenges within the boundary wall of their house resulting in severe gender inequities, barriers placing them squarely in their reproductive roles mobility and their ability of taking charge of their lives. There are not many opportunities that exist for home-bound women in the rural areas to take on equitable productive roles. (USAID, JULY 2012).

Women embellishment in Balochistan have rich cultural heritage of handicrafts where Thousands of poor household women throughout work from home predominantly embroidery. Unique stitch work of Balochi & Pashtoon culture with added contemporary designs along with apparel variation is in well demand in Pakistan & abroad. A number of designs by each tribe apply different set of ornaments on variety of products including dresses, bed sets, cushions covers, tray covers, tea-cozies, dining set, table cloths, shawls, dupatta (scarf), cap, belt/ladies purses, shoulders bags and other decorative items including carpet weaving, quilt crafting, embroidery, tailoring & wool spinning etc. (Treasures, 2011), Whereas on other hand potential still exists for indigenous communities to engage in economic generating activities with emerging mega projects such as CPEC that is assumed as game changer determined to change for the inhabitants of region (AMUTHA, 2013).

Rationale

Women in rural Balochistan are at majority marginalized due to poverty, confinement at home along with geographic isolation, unpaid agriculture tenants, non-farm activities and household chores etc. Being conservative its even hard to intervene for changes in behavior towards women rights

&empowerment in conservative environment employing intriguing facts effecting socio-economic conditions. Balochistan with its own enriched cultural heritage of embellishment is added with through influx of Afghan refugees with specialization at stitches in silk, Gold & silver thread as well shells & mirror work as key source influencing women participation in business (DEEBA, JAN 2011).

Efforts regarding creating differences at community level by intellectual class/ researcher in this domain are not extensively notable but treated as generic issue rather with holistic approach. As of yet still gaps followed by opportunities and mainstreaming mechanism for substantial number of producers/household embellishers exist that needs to be identified with coping strategy that may be effective at local tier with possible outreach or access that would initiate a model for improvement in quality& designs leading to greater impact of gains meeting the demands of further lucrative markets.

Furthermore the study will facilitate towards identification of genuine cause and effect relationship of women household embellishment to boost both social and economic standards within the traditional parameters with an in-depth insight. The

study will also promote further fields to be researched in later stages including communication gaps among key stake holders, transportation cost, and costing and pricing, value chain management, financial mechanism for inputs, market linkages and exposure that will ultimately lead to demonstrate policy reformation at its basic level with updated socio-economic conditions.

Objectives

1. To summarize the existing condition and environment for house hold women embellisher in Balochistan.
2. To identify means of factors that help them promote business creation activities
3. To understand coherent relationship among socio-economic variables for mutual effects.

METHODOLOGY

For the understanding the dynamics concerning to local women with a gradual change on social aspects based on the skills they may employ at traditional embroidery to reorganize their traditional strength reducing economic dependency for better social inclusion. This study was focused on women embellishers, for understanding social aspects of traditional embroidery its contribution to for reclaiming social

inclusion for highlighting the challenges and limitations of women embellishers. The study conducted is based on quantitative design to assess impacts of women embellishment on social domains in Quetta through pretesting initially of 10 respondents

for effective feasibility through questionnaire method where an estimated 5000 embellishers were confirmed by various studies with only 7% active. Given below target respondents were classified for information collection via standard sampling.

<i>Respondents</i>	Married	Unmarried	Divorced and Others
170	100	50	20

For the development of the questionnaire literature were reviewed with focused on unrevealed aspect existing condition and environment for house women embellishers, factors promoting business women embellishers and mainly on relationship among socio-economic variables for mutual effects.

Snow ball sampling approached was adopted for the data collection, for the collection of the data Researcher himself approached the target respondents and collected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As devised around 170 women embellishers were interrogated on snowball sampling technique where marital status is equally sanctioned to get the required data, out of which 100 single female women embellishers (59%) 50 married (29%) and 20(12%) divorced were considered with majority of embellishers (43.5) were recorded below 20 Years followed 27.6% in between age group of 21 to 25 along with 2.4% falling in 36-40 years whereas 42.8% were found graduates, 38.8% inter qualified , 3% post graduate and only 4% illiterate as show below.

**Table: 01
Marital Status**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Married	50	29.4	29.4	29.4
Singe	100	58.8	58.8	88.2
Widow/Divorced	20	11.8	11.8	100.0
Total	170	100.0		100.0

Table: 02
Education

Value	0	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
5		7	4.1	4.1	4.1
8		2	1.2	1.2	5.3
10		4	2.4	2.4	7.6
12		3	1.8	1.8	9.4
14		66	38.8	38.8	48.2
16		83	48.8	48.8	97.1
Total		5	2.9	2.9	100.0
		170		100.0	100.0

The data gathered for the study focused three core areas defined as

1. Social factors
2. Economic determinants
3. Embellishment value chain development

The data reveals that legislation and policies are drafted frequently to protect women rights at various level but applicability matters usually as major challenge in general. Exercise of economic protection facilitated by both religion and state of assets through inherited transfer is neglected to retain male dominance and economic dependency on female counter part. Relevant factors such as historical, cultural, traditional and religious are focused that are found most of the time miss-interpreted adversely affecting women uplift towards economic generating activities, decision making and over all social inclusion. Time allocations for women are never suitable for extra activity other than managing house chores but yet they manage to spare time for craft work and embroidery.

Out of the busy town life, Women in particularly are found isolated on emotional or psychological account that's quite rarely documented due to tribal mechanism in focused area with variation in its degree based on family or community temporal structure even for professionally skilled female workers. Half of women during study were found to have attainment to basic needs including identity, food, shelter, clothing, health, emotional & psychological cover , Social or personal protection & education strongly influenced by level of understanding and vicinity that ultimately leads to minimum personal privacy as well dysfunctional characters in their personality traits with low productivity.

Women are well known to basics of hand embellished fabrics and its potential advantage as basic component of cultural & ethnic representation apparently with various traditional designs, colours and added works impressed by the surrounding culture and trends. Competitive earning industry has

brought a degree of change in its design, color combinations, packaging & mobility on professional level for financial purposes where machines have replaced workers but quality and fineness of working still lies in products crafted by the hands of women embellishers where efforts are required to be placed for technical assistance through multidisciplinary trainings, workshops, sales events, access to unconditional and easy micro-financing facility, access to quality raw material and better exposure visits through better market linkages that were observed as the major value chain barriers for newly growing entrepreneurs where middle man earns the maximum expiating such

vulnerabilities. There still lacks a proper coordination and unions/bindings between the entrepreneurs to protect their rights avoiding vulnerabilities exploited by third party or brands through joint mutual cooperation, sharing and understanding to meet the latest consumer demands on competitive returns nullifying the risks with its utmost extent.

A study carried out to determine the degrees of push and pull factors influencing the enhancement of women entrepreneurship in Quetta provides with a detailed overview of understanding the ground scenario with given stated results.

Table : 03

Factors	Mean	Rank
-Lack of family support & orthodoxies	5.27	1
-Family Obligations	5.15	2
-Poor Credit Facilities	5.11	3
-Lack of Finances	4.97	4
-Male Dominance	4.62	5
-Stringent Polices	4.27	6
-Attracting Customers	4.13	7
-Hostile Society	4.02	8
-Weak Bargaining Poston	3.98	9
Improper Training & Development facilities	3.82	10
-Harassment	3.78.	11
-Non Cooperation of Males	3.63	12
-Unfavorable Market Behaviors	3.44	13
-Unavailability of Sale Points	3.09	14
.Difficulty n dealing with males	3.07	15
'Difficulties in f riding Appropriate Markets	2.72	16
-Heavy Taxes/F« & Duties etc.	2.56	17
-Inflation	2.52	18
-Red tape/Bribery	2.19	19
-insufficient Governmental Support	2.01	20
-Lack of Experience	2.00	21
-Lack of Proper Training,	1.91	22

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Having scattered population with low means of transportation & communication women

embellisher are facing mobility constraints and social restricted to remain home bound that has severe impacts on access to

information, quality input factors and intra/inter coordination for optimum end results. Community facilitation center working as community gathering for women embellishers on joint ventures would help them a point for meeting, sharing and updating information as well a forum to develop linkages with suppliers, retailers and micro financing institutions along with other various activates conducive for their entrepreneurial engagement. Embroidery is mostly crafted at home needs a channel to exhibit at available local, regional or even international forums/ markets to expand their business initiatives.

Skills exists but require a proper mainstream mean to initiate introductory workshops to explore value addition services to entrepreneurial abilities of women embellishers through product development by tracing & designing, packaging, market/fashion trends, innovation in textile, quality control/check and time management for efficient production process. Trainings on marketing, business planning, advertising, costing and pricing would further strengthen the ties in the field of stitching, tailoring and dyeing along with input supply services creating a resource pool of value added results. Financing identified as a major issue for the process to women embellishers seek

support of micro-financing institution but lengthy documentation process & tight recovery conditional factors with complex terms/conditions is discouraging whereas the alternate would be conventional community based saving groups working in pool to address the issue.

Exhibition of products is an essential components through direct or Sample book preparation and catalogue/ broacher development to organize buyer-seller meeting in order to showcase the crafted stills that would attract the buyers for placement of orders as well creating new avenues for likewise stakeholders such as mainstream market players, market shops, boutiques, retailers, buyers and most important the known brands with recognition across the country. There are a great number of designs, colors, stitches women have been practicing in needlework since centuries in Balochistan but still their work is not mainstreamed as such. Women are not getting enough wages of their work and the low earning did not allow them to encourage this skill. Home producers of embroidery tend to be marginalized by poverty, home confinement and geographic isolation. As a result, although the quality of their skills can be excellent, their products often do not

reach markets or cannot compete with more fashionable imports.

A desired supportive mechanism to empower women embellishers in the cultural context of Balochistan is accompanied with challenges & risks to counter keeping in consideration gender role in the prospective of the longstanding cultural differences, unaffordable markets environment, political & economic instability/isolation, religious & social pressure and in major mobility constraints with rigid behaviors. Despite existence of certain factors that affects the impact and operation of home based entrepreneur's in hand embellished fabrics industry still provides with multifarious likelihood for enabling environment for women to increase their employability through stream lining the value chain approaches with concentrated organized efforts mutually. Consistency at hindrances in norms and culture needs to be neutralized to dismantle the male dominated phobia in practice through raising awareness and social engagements promoting women with their due rights towards access with socio-economic uplift including policy review at state level through positive intentions and representation.

Ethical Consideration

Competing Interests:

I confirm that there is no competing interests involved of any of the authors in this manuscript.

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Informed consent:

Complying with ethical standards Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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