

Chapter-6

CONCLUSION

Chapter – 6

Conclusion

The impact of modernization on Women of Afghanistan and Kashmir has been significant but not identical. The changes thereof in both societies are at the most similar at a very high level of generalization by virtue of being ethnically dissimilar and culturally worlds apart, besides experiencing different historical processes. However, both societies find a common ground in religion (Islam) and violent political atmosphere. Both have been subjected to a common patriarchal social order emanating from a religio-customary fountain head. In the former case more rigid and militant but in later case somewhat soft and non-violent. In Afghanistan Patriarchal order executed by physical violence amounting to killing or lynching, but in Kashmir the breach of patriarchal norm is responded with social rebuke or avoidance. The differences in women's response to modernization and the consequences owe more to structural differences in Afghanistan and Kashmiri societies. The former structured as tribal and the later as a peculiar type of caste system.

Modernization has impacted women of both societies in both extensional and intensional dimensions .There are quite visible changes in their intimate and personal features of life, however ,the study reveals continuities of tradition as well. It is further revealed that neither modernization nor traditionalism can claim to be the cut of the whole cloth.

The study subscribes to the established viewpoint that despite modernization traditional values persist for a pretty long time and that there is no simplistic displacement of tradition. Traditional values get withered not by the modernization per se but by the disappearance of the conditions that give rise to them in the first instance. It is revealed that tradition and religious values in Afghanistan and Kashmir are neither homogeneous nor harmonious as is strongly held by the advocates of modernization .In Kashmir instance, tradition and modernization has proved comparatively more co-existing. Although women in Kashmir is generally getting released from the life time sentence in the kitchen, but she is still the producer of food and the exploitation through double shift (working women) is an emerging issue for feminists, empowering agencies and human

rights activists. Infact there are some modest exceptions with some modifications and redefinitions of muscularity, characterized by sharing some domestic chores by menfolk.

The familial and tribal structures of Afghanistan lay emphasis on ‘system maintenance’ and lack the dynamics to override the tradition of the collective. In such a social order fulfilment of familial and tribal obligations carry the highest value, particularly in crisis situation or when the collective as a whole is threatened either by another tribe, or an invader with an alien culture. The study reveals that under the influence of modernization today’s Afghan Woman and Kashmiri Woman is neither modern nor traditional in western sense. Modernization implies innovation but tradition does not necessarily mean frozenness. Both subjects are passing through a transitional phase, characterized by the imprints of modern traditional and traditional modern traits. The implications are quite manifest in material aspects of culture than in non-material aspects which include beliefs and value system.

Present study subscribes “Bellah Roberts” assertion that the ‘religion provides a meaningful set of values and a specific world view’. In Afghanistan and Kashmir Islam provides such values and world view. Such values (Riwaj) in Kashmiri society are less stringent and more prone to transformation as compared to “*pukhtunwali*” of Afghanistan. The hypothesis stating that Kashmiri women is more receptive to modernization than Afghan woman stands positively testified. The inference is subscribed through their achievements in modern education, professional courses and employment, political awareness and participation, entrepreneurship and a general attitude towards change.

Crisis, war and insecurity are revealed to be negatively correlated to modernization drives. No functional analogy is found between Islamic doctrine work ethics and Weber’s Protestant ethics, which in capitalist development is the driving force of development and transformation of social relations including gender relations. That there is a significant difference between scripture, doctrine, Prophetic traditions and actual social practices; be it acquisition of knowledge, equality ,inheritance or gender relations. Lack of industrialization is also contributing to lesser differentiation resulting in less vibrant economic structure, hampering growth and diversification of job markets which otherwise leads to structural alterations coupled with fluid politico-economic factors, predominately subsistent economics of Afghanistan and Kashmir block the shift from

other worldly to this worldly attitude. The study further reveals that it is not Islam per-se hampering women empowerment but traditional social order glued to often misinterpreted verse and tradition and obstruct modernization drives. In Afghanistan traditional is interpenetrated and fused with theology and are often used interchangeably.

In both Afghanistan and Kashmir, modernization project is handiwork of incumbent political elite/state, enacted by well-established professional bureaucracy through economic institutes as the chief instrument of social transformation. Since its inception as a modern state, Afghanistan political elite, bureaucracy and economic institutions have experienced violent hiccups and instability. Instead of concentrating on development, these are engaged in structural strategies characterized by security and survival. On the contrary Kashmir availed a relative stability from 1947 to 1980's; the period which experienced successful drives of modernization and development including women empowerment.

In both societies religion and tradition is antithetical to many dimensions of modernization, but in day to day dealings Afghan woman and Kashmiri woman are opting for rationalization and compartmentalization, where religious values and precepts, traditional codes and sanctions and new norms of modern life are separated, especially where there is intense desire for material goods, social status, power and prestige which come along with educational achievements, wealth and political office.

Afghan society has certainly undergone many changes in fortune, always within a context of the imbalance that exists between social expectations and failure to fulfil demands and needs. As the world is engaged in Afghan imbroglio, the Afghan woman is silently holding the banner of family honor, the chains of traditions and customs. The afghan women continue to confront a number of major obstacles towards equal opportunities and improved quality of life. They have been caught in between: insecurity and violence. Traditions and modernity. Islam and tribal codes.

Afghan women have fought alongside their men in the struggle for liberal social rights. They have also suffered the loss of family members and loved ones and a substantial part of their homes and belongings, and some have been displaced or captured at gunpoint by brutal warlords and rival militia, Inspite of that in the past few years the proportion of women in political, social, economic and cultural activities in the capital and in the provinces has increased. This is the reality: Afghan women who had been devoid of any

identity are struggling to have one. Although the Ministry of Women's Affairs, women's rights research institutions and cultural and economic services are working to safeguard women's rights with the help of the international community to be able to reap the freedom, and benefits of modernized life. One of our important conclusions shows that the adverse security situation and the exclusion that girls and women have suffered in other areas have also affected them and put them at a disadvantage with regard to their efforts to modernize. All these factors, plus forced marriages, make it impossible for girls and women to continue their schooling and education. Security, or the lack thereof, is the most important factor, meanwhile the assistance of the international community of more than forty countries in promoting human rights - especially women's and children's rights and reconstructing Afghanistan is showing some positive consequences on the ground level.

Kashmir till late 80s enjoyed relative peace and post 1947 witnessed tremendous progress in modernization drives steered by apt policy formulation and vigorous execution in all walks of life including women's education and their overall modernization in both material and non-material aspects. The mass change among Kashmiri women started from early 20th century. While the upper class women responded early and fully to the changing processes, other women belonging to lower socio-economic groups responded the change very late. The role of women changed from a child bearing and rearing machine to the bread earner too. Due to the rapid growth of industrialization and modernization, urbanization, development in the field of transport and communication, improvement in science and technology, not only new roles for the women emerged, but also new social norms and values developed. The women started getting education and showed interest in the political and professional fields. Besides, the other areas of social living, they began to come out of the domestic spheres and took professional roles outside their homes. This helped them to realize their potential broadened their outlook and created a new meaning for themselves. The traditional role of a house wife gradually evolved into the dual and more fulfilling role of professional working wife. Thus the Kashmiri women have undergone a significant degree of change in the fields of education, technology, entrepreneurship, sports, nutrition and health. Education including technical and professional education started now for women from primary to university level. They started to be employed in services, bureaucracy and professional and technical occupations. They have now entered into

occupations and professions formerly practiced and dominated by men From the last decade female child has continuously outscored male students in almost all examinations of qualifying and professional courses.

The study further reveals that it is mostly through women's own talent, scientific knowledge and attitude, highly excellent academic pursuits that she occupies a dignified place in the society. The changes in their positions and roles have brought along with them changing attitudes, changing behavior patterns and the emerging problems related to them, women empowerment in Kashmir is proportional to some social problems as a consequences of modernization, which demands restructuring many institutions but simultaneously demands for readjustments with regard to family, child care ,and power sharing at domestic and societal levels The alarming rate of divorces, late marriages and dowry has become a great threat to those "fathers" whose daughters are unemployed or having low economic status.

Education is found positively related to the payment of dowry. As the education of the women increases, payment of dowry also increases. In spite of increasing education of women and their increasing role in the society, the practice of the dowry is becoming more widespread, and the value of dowry is increasing. In past, dowry was generally not demanded from groom's side .Groom price instead of bride price is fast turning into a norm and the practice appears to be firmly institutionalized in Kashmir society. The phenomenon is over stressing families with lower middle class or lower class status income and life style. Mostly the gifts were given to girl by her family out of their own free will because girl's parents believed that a generous dowry is essential to ensure that their daughter is treated well in her new home. But the situation has changed; now there is a proper demand from the boy's side for a handsome dowry. The amount of dowry depends upon the boy's educational qualification, designation and the family background. In addition to this menace the recurrence of domestic violence in all forms is found to be slightly more common among the more educated women. Recently a women Gazetted officer namely Mudasira Aziz from Srinagar was murdered by his husband, in order to carry forward his illegal affair with his cousin. For two years she suffered a silent domestic violence in order to maintain her relationship and a well-established social status, not knowing that it would turn into her death ultimately.

Women do not afford to speak against being abused out of fear for family dishonor. The case studies also reveal domestic violence both physical and psychological irrespective of education. It is imperative that women are equipped with the tools necessary to help and empower themselves. As per my research findings with the spread of education a large number of women in Kashmir are occupying professional jobs, the biggest concentration being in teaching. Their diversification in other jobs and professions such as law, judiciary, engineering, technology, administration, etc. has also taken place but it is still on a rather modest scale. As the ‘teaching’ is not too difficult to be combined with the work and role of homemaking. A large majority of those who were unemployed are of opinion that they do not find employment because of the scarcity of suitable jobs in an inordinately slow-moving economy. In the present study it was found that the attitude of females towards work and their participation in different occupations are changing and contemporary modernization drives and corresponding social and individual attitudes are positively correlated. The findings reveal that women in Kashmir are inclined towards employment because they consider economic independence as a means to achieve economic freedom and empowerment. This reiterates the need to re-evaluate misconceptions about women in Kashmir.

As the change is an essential feature of the social development, the women folk of Afghanistan and Kashmir has been generally accepting and actively participating in it despite customary gender discrimination in both societies; they are running parallel to each other. While the women of Kashmir has totally changed the life style in all spheres of life. In both societies formal education as the significant bullwork to modernization, chiefly responsible for broadening the vision and formulation of attitude towards change, has failed to deliver the desired results due to various factors. The most significant being destruction of educational infrastructure, communication, insecure and war ridden economics, budgetary allotments, traditional patriarchal social order and scarcity of professional human capital in educational institutes. Despite vigorous modernization drives on state and Ngo’s level, the study subscribes to Tamney’s study (1979-80) who while testing Roof’s model on a selected sample of 2387 Indonesian Muslims, found that modernization is not correlated to the decline of the established religiosity .Surprisingly as the secular and modern education increases, there is a corresponding increase in religiosity, especially its faith dimension. In Afghanistan and Kashmir the women holding jobs in different sections are by faith religious but by relationships quite secular.
