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Patriarchal Relativity, Structural Violence, and Inequalities: Semiotics of the Rural and Urban Kitchens in Pakistan

Abstract

The semiotics of the kitchen in Pakistan in terms of sustainable development, structural violence and unequal distribution of resources, particularly technological ones, has been analyzed. The diverse architecture and resources in the kitchen in rural and urban settings have been linked with gender-based oppression and inequality in the light of the concepts of patriarchal relativity and compound patriarchy elaborated by Akgul (2017), capabilities suggested by Nassbaum (2000), and the semiotics of kitchen attributed to Rosler (1975). By studying the semiotics of the architecture of nine purposively selected images of kitchens in Pakistan, the gender hierarchies and binaries of men and women as 'haves' or 'have-nots' and privileged or multi-marginalized have been elaborated. The analysis of Pakistani rural and urban kitchens suggests that the architecture of the kitchen connotes unequal distribution of resources, such as the supply of gas, electricity, and water among women living in rural and urban areas.

Keywords: Compound patriarchy, inequalities, gender, rural vs urban areas, structural violence, access to resources, semiotics of the kitchen

Introduction

Patriarchy is any system of political, economic, financial, religious, or social organization in which the overwhelming number of upper positions in hierarchies is held by males (Goldberg, 1979). It is a “system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (Walby, 1990, p. 24). Patriarchy is “produced within the construction of gender” (Butler, 1990, p. 5), whereby men dominate women “both structurally and ideologically” (Hunnicut, 2009, p. 78); however, Kandiyoti, (2000, p. 8) reinforcing patriarchy as a system of social structures based on “hierarchical relationships” (Akgul, 2017. p. 33) also include male juniors, as well as women as one of the oppressed groups and establishes that “power is, at times, centralized over seniority” (Akgul, 2017. p. 33). Expanding the debate on patriarchy, Akgul (2017) asserts,

“compound patriarchy is a social structure of multilayered oppression in which more than one oppression operates at the same time, created by horizontal and vertical relations in the society, causing and resulting from gendered, racial, ethnic and international hierarchy to control, among others, men and women and through a system of metaphorical reproduction of oppression, and at times, the ruler-subject binary” (p. 39).

Akgul (2017) declares that due to various forms of patriarchy existing within the same social system, oppression is also multifarious and multi-layered. Men can be “oppressor and the oppressed at the same time” (Akgul, 2017, p. 115), which implies that they are oppressed by the state and in turn oppress women. Akgul (2017) suggests, the forms of patriarchy include horizontal patriarchy which is “inequality within equality” (p. 44) whereby women themselves choose oppression by sacrificing for their husbands and fathers, resulting in “self-oppression” (p. 116); vertical patriarchy in which “both actors have a hierarchical relationship” (p. 61), be they state and man, man and woman, parent and child, or teacher and student; and structured patriarchy which is “abstract, reproductive, and metaphorical”, involves “governance of gender” and includes state and citizens (p. 61).

Akgul (2017) claims that within the system of patriarchal relativity, not only men oppress the women but also the state oppresses men and women, and women oppress other women. Due to an intricate web of horizontal, vertical and compound relationships within a society, “every woman experiences patriarchy differently, and often each woman experiences a number of particularities at the same time” (Akgul, 2017, p. 65). Akgul’s (2017) concept of patriarchal relativity is based on an intersection of “patriarchy, privilege and compensation” which allows various forms of patriarchy to operate within a social structure and multiple structures of oppression to “stem from a subject’s, at times, self-inflicting need, as they assign value to a need that had to be sustained at the expense of another subject’s more prevalent needs” (p. 44).

Akgul (2017) uses the “ladder metaphor” to display how patriarchy is multifaceted yet relative for men and women and argues that due to patriarchy taking multiple shapes, the relationship between state and men is reflected through the relationship between men and women, parents and children or teachers and students. Akgul (2017) argues that men are to women what state is to men. As state assigns only the

reproductive role of motherhood to women, situates them in the kitchen, considers their labour worthless, doesn't mobilize state officials to hold male perpetrators immediately accountable for female abuse, it displays no concern for the

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“trauma women go through, their psychology, and their human rights of indivisibility and their right to life” (p. 131). In displaying no concern, the state establishes female oppression as a norm and men further perpetuate it in their hierarchical relationships with women. Other women also perpetuate oppression, in order to temporarily get rid of their own oppression. Moreover, Akgul (2017) suggests that women themselves keep compensating, over-compensating, and sacrificing until they are empowered. Due to the perpetuation of multifaceted oppression through “prioritization” based on “how different needs are protected through violating others’ needs, which are different in rank and possible urgency” (p. 170), the system keeps reproducing patriarchy which in turn causes more oppression and this vicious process never comes to an end. “Oppression in no way is random or circumstantial” (Akgul, 2017, p. 39).

As the state neglects women, they stay in the same conditions; however, if the state empowers them, their plight changes. “What matters is not the abuse taking place but the society’s response, ability, capacity and will to eliminate it that allows such abuse to occur repetitively” (Akgul, 2017, p. 98). The present study will analyse the images of the kitchen on the basis of Akgul’s (2017) theoretical framework of patriarchal relativity and the forms of oppression associated with it. It endeavours to study if and how patriarchal relativity affects men and keeps a woman in rural Pakistan “overcompensating” (Akgul, 2017) in her “situatedness” (Mansoor, 2016, p. 8), while, determining her role as a marginalized “other” (Spivak, 1985) due to her positioning in an interlocking system of oppression.

With a population of 220.9 million, Pakistan ranks 5th among the most populous countries of the world. Punjab has the largest share of the total population, 52.95%, followed by Sindh 23.05 %, KPK 14.69 %, and Balochistan 5.94 %, according to the Census 2017 (Pakistan Economic Survey 2017-18). Most of the country's population lives in rural areas, despite the fact that the country is rapidly urbanising. The rural population has dropped from 82.2% in 1951 to 63.6% in 2017. The urban population grew at a pace of 2.4% per year. “Out of Pakistan’s 132 million rural population, 65 million are women. Sixty-two percent women work in the fields, while only 19 percent women are in paid employment and 60 percent work as unpaid workers on family farms and enterprises. The unpaid work is valued at 2.6 percent of the national GDP” (FAO, 2020). In addition, Pakistani rural men and women are also not legally well-protected (Cheema & Riaz, 2021).

When we think of the architecture of a village in Pakistan, what comes to our mind is mud houses, trees, *dera* (a place where men socialise), mosque, large verandas, large, connected roofs, ponds of stinking water, and cow dung adorning the walls. Except a few large, well-furnished houses which are called *kothis* (mansion) in the rural areas, most of the houses present a penurious picture of broken walls, mud, and uneven streets. Obviously, as people from various socioeconomic backgrounds reside in villages, there is a difference in the architecture and look of the houses. In the cities, the same diversity can be observed but when we visit, two different areas of Lahore and Karachi, two major cities of Pakistan, the diversity generates a deep sense of inequality. If you visit the villages in any of the four provinces, for instance, in Thar, you may perhaps wonder if it is even possible to live there. On the one hand, there are areas, where people do not even need to bother pressing a button to switch the light on, while on the other hand, there are areas, where people neither have switches, nor electricity.

Naturally, one questions the role of politicians, assistant commissioners, deputy commissioners, and contractors in the plight of these cities or villages for the previous 70 years. Of course, Pakistanis donate a large sum of money to charity every year, and I am not disparaging the efforts of many offices, but having exposure to both rural and urban settings, as well as developed countries, I have attempted to highlight how the kitchen in Pakistan is a space that regulates inequality among women from various geographies and social classes. Therefore, the present study calls attention to those men and women who suffer due to poor facilitation, both by themselves and by the state. In the case of women, the oppression multiplies on multiple levels that eventually position them in various and often unimaginable layers of oppression, inequality, and victimhood because a woman in a system of compound patriarchy suffers from the oppression caused by the state, husband, in-laws, other women, and her own incapacity to stand up for herself. There is no denying the fact that the husband, in-laws, and the other women are also oppressed on certain levels in a compound patriarchal system. Women in Pakistan's rural areas not only manage homes and cook for their families, but also participate in a variety of paid and unpaid labour jobs, primarily in agriculture (Ishaq & Memon, 2016; Jabeen, et al., 2020). Understanding the semiotics of the kitchen, therefore, may help highlight female

oppression with reference to the oppression experienced by those who oppress them. The following question guides the study:

What does the semiotics of the kitchen in Pakistan reflect about gender asymmetries?

The study is the first study of its kind in the Pakistani context because the existing research does focus on inequalities but the semiotics of the kitchen with reference to patriarchal relativity, gender, and oppression has not been studied earlier. Malmström (2015) notes that the kitchen is the place where women are taught gender asymmetries. The very act of cooking requires patience and its association with womanhood and restriction of women to the walls of the kitchen has been regulating gender-based inequalities for centuries. Butler (1990) suggests that gender is performative and socially constructed, requiring a woman to perform certain activities repeatedly within a rigid regulatory frame. In patriarchal settings, men assume the role of providers, while women take up the roles of cooking and managing homes. Cooking is a part of the process of “girling” (Butler, 1990, p. 148) in such a setting. Studying the kitchen, therefore, is relevant and paramount.

Moreover, the study highlights male oppression in the Pakistani context, which is an under-studied area globally, in general, and in the Pakistani context, in particular (Riaz, 2021; Riaz, 2019). The study also highlights multiple layers of gender-based oppression and locates under-privileged rural women in relation to not only men but also underprivileged urban women, underprivileged and oppressed women in backward areas, and privileged women across class systems in Pakistan. The study also positions gender in relation to the state. Research on patriarchal relativity in detail is missing in the Pakistani context. The study, therefore, not only fills the gap in the existing research but also extends debates on gender-based multi-layered inequalities among the broader category of oppressed Pakistani women. It also locates the ‘oppressive and aggressive Pakistani male’ in the category of an oppressed citizen of the state.

Cin (2017) suggests,

“the capabilities approach acknowledges human diversity (race, gender and ethnicity) and criticises the fact that equality is measured in male terms and that men’s lives form the standard, which tends to ignore and overlook the impact of gender on women’s lives through gendered institutions, power, ideologies and norms, or the biological differences between sexes, which all subsume gender inequality in women’s lives” (p.11).

The present study looks into the concept of inequalities not solely in terms of different sexes but asymmetries in the resources available to women living in the same system because “*women*”, is not a “universal category but an intersectional one that works alongside race, sexuality, class, ability and a host of other markers of *difference*” (Gruwell, 2015, p. 119). “Lumping together a diverse group of individuals under the identity category women carries the risk of erasing the differences—particularly the material ones—that (dis)empower them” (Gruwell, 2015, p. 119).

The study is an opportunity for the policymakers, bureaucrats, politicians, armed forces, economists, men, women, and other women to understand what is missing in their lives or lives of the citizens dependent on them, and how gaps can actively be bridged in terms of building capabilities to improve access to resources. It not only contributes to a better understanding of gender-based inequities and oppression in connection to access to resources, but it also documents ‘the kitchen’ as an aspect of Pakistani culture.

Kitchen is called ‘*baawarchikhana*’ in Urdu, Sindhi, and Punjabi. Sometimes a corner or limited allocated for cooking is called ‘*rasoi*’ in Pakistani villages. In Balochi and Pashto, the kitchen is called ‘*dalaan*’. In the present study, the kitchen has been used as a prism to see through the realities and living standards of men and women in the rural and urban areas of Pakistan. The kitchen, in the present study, has been studied and perceived as symbolic of the well-being of people and a socio-semiotic projection of the contours of their socio-economic realities.

“Semiotics being the study or ‘science of signs’ and their general role as vehicles of meaning in culture. Discourses are ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice: a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society” (Hall, 1997, p. 6).

Semiotics is a study of systematic symbols and signs while sign is a motivated one because it is interpreted only in a particular context (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). ‘*Semiotics of the Kitchen*’ is a six-minute recording produced in 1975 by Martha Rosler. She used an alphabet worth of kitchen tools to participate in a feminist critique of the traditional gender roles. Her actions in the video are marked by

dissatisfaction and outrage at women's oppressive patriarchal roles. Rosler's philosophy is based on semiotics, which holds that words are just indicators of social interactions that humans employ to explain their surroundings. All of this was captured in a format comparable to 1960s television shows. The video depicts Rosler in a kitchen setting. She gathers each tool by herself and declares their names, such as beater, fork, grater, and so on. Rosler does not consider kitchen tools to be a domesticated mother's helper'. Instead, the tools pose a challenge for her (Keller, 2019; Public Delivery, 2021).

“Rosler reveals the instrumentalized position of women and eventually becomes a weapon for herself within the framework of her alphabetical order. It also demonstrates that it is crucial to identify and examine the structures of power, supremacy, obedience, and their ideological implications within the cultural, social, and political fields, as well as the language and signs framework that make up the order of the symbols... In *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, she explains that the language used in the video was intended to indicate the role of a woman in a patriarchal society” (Public Delivery, 2021).

Buscemi (2014) studied the semiotics of the gender roles of Italian women in the kitchen as represented in three programs and noted that women were managing the roles of housewives and chefs. By reflecting on 2,206 restaurant reviews and chef profiles given in American newspapers and magazines, Harris and Giuffre (2015) explored the professional kitchen as a space of inequalities. By studying the kitchen catalogues of IKEA from 1975 to 2016, Ledin and Machin (2018) explored the changing semiotic representation of the kitchen from the perspective of technologization and neoliberal order which is based on flexibility, dynamism, creativity, and self-management and solution-oriented approach. They found that IKEA kitchen has evolved in terms of neoliberal ideals and values. Nixon (2017) explored the involvement of designers, policymakers, and utility firms in shaping new conceptions of domesticity, particularly the modern kitchen ideal in the British context.

The present study is an attempt to understand the semiotics of the kitchen in the Pakistani context. Riaz (2021) has studied the semiotics of rape in the Pakistani context by analyzing the digital illustrations and noted that the images depict rape myths and gender ideologies and hide rapists, male rape victims, burqa-clad women, and multiple social actors involved in the crime. Illustrations portray gender disparities while hiding the negative role of the state and law enforcement agencies. Riaz (2019) and Riaz and Rafi (2019) explored the semiotics of gender roles in the digital illustrations and paintings on honour killing in Pakistan, respectively. They noted that the social structure is oppressive towards women, while male victims of honour killing have not been represented. Nasim (2021) studied symbolism in the architecture of the Faisal Mosque and its visual representation in Pakistan. I couldn't find studies on the semiotics of the kitchen in Pakistan.

Kaygan (2016) suggests, “in material semiotics, relational thinking is applied not only to signs but also to material objects. All entities, living or non-living, are shaped within and by relations” (p. 78). Durand (2015) also supports that the objects, artefacts, and buildings become potent media through which people think and history is thought. Beck (2021) notes that homes are much more than dwelling spaces because they embody social ideologies and expectations of who we are and where we belong; therefore, exploring domestic spaces such as the kitchen is crucial for understanding the social realities of marginalized communities. From a feminist perspective, the kitchen is “the arena for the domestication of the colonized or exploited female ‘other’”, and a space where “status is confirmed and exclusion practiced”, and “First and Third World inequalities” of women are ‘brought home’ (Floyd, 2004, p. 62). The present study, therefore, fills the gap in the academic literature on the kitchen as a female realm and a space of privilege and oppression. By studying the images of the kitchen as materialistic discourse, it helps in understanding how the hierarchical realities of Pakistani women entangle with broader ecologies.

Methods

To carry out an analysis of the images of the kitchen in rural and urban settings in Pakistan, the present study combines the frameworks of patriarchal relativity suggested by Akgul (2017) and the capabilities model suggested by Nassbaum (2000, 2011). In addition, as visual signs of the kitchens in Pakistani villages, cities, undeveloped villages, and small cities have been studied, so the semiotics of the kitchen suggested by Rosler (1975) and social semiotic approaches, such as the grammar of visual design suggested by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) also inform the analysis with a focus on the ideational signs. Ideational signs also indicate ‘what is’ in an image. The objects, shapes, lines, background, foreground, and relationships between the things in an image, as well as their symbolic significance, are all dealt with by the ideational metafunction (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The purposive sampling strategy was used to select nine images through a

Google search. The author’s ethnographic understanding and exposure to rural and urban areas help carry out an interpretive analysis of the ideational signs. It is important to understand that the selected images given in Table 1 represent underprivileged social classes in rural areas (R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7) and privileged social classes in urban areas (U3 and U5). Depending upon the geography and socio-economic class, such as upper or lower middle classes living in cities, small towns, or villages, a kitchen may take many other shapes as well. Overall, middle class kitchens in Pakistan are less sophisticated and poorly equipped versions of the ones represented in images U3 and U5. In rural areas, middle class people may have two kitchens: 1. Open-air, traditional kitchen (R1); 2. poorly furnished and equipped version of a lower middle-class kitchen.

Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: *Images of the Kitchens in Rural and Urban Areas in Pakistan*

Sr. No.	Kitchen in Rural Areas	Kitchen in Urban Areas
	R	U
1		
2		
3		

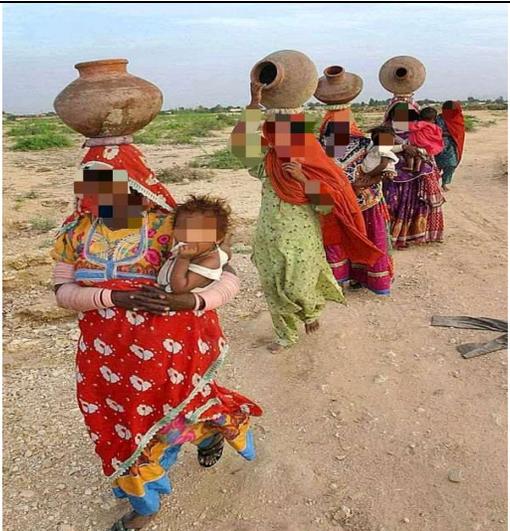
4	 A photograph of a well in a rural village. The well is a concrete structure with a decorative facade featuring colorful floral patterns and a small staircase leading up to it. Several women in colorful saris are gathered around the well, and a large pot is visible on the right.	
5	 A photograph showing two women at a public water tap. One woman, wearing a red sari, is filling a large metal pot. Another woman, wearing a purple sari and an orange headscarf, is standing nearby. A young child is also present, sitting on the ground near the water tap.	 A photograph of a modern kitchen interior. The kitchen features white cabinetry, a black countertop, a stainless steel sink, and a built-in oven. A red bowl is visible on the counter in the foreground.
6	 A photograph of a group of women walking along a dirt path. They are carrying large, round, brown pots on their heads. The women are wearing colorful saris, and one woman in the foreground is carrying a young child.	
7	 A photograph of a woman walking along a dirt path near a body of water. She is carrying a large, round, brown pot on her head. The woman is wearing a colorful sari, and the background shows a green field and trees.	

Table 1 suggests the rural urban divide in terms of women's access to resources in Pakistan. The ideational signs in the images representing rural kitchens include handpump, mud stove, utensils made of steel, wood, and mud, broken walls, bricks, roofless spaces, heaps of cow dung cakes, mud walls, pitchers, unmetalled dusty roads, and fields, etc. Contrarily, the ideational signs in the two images representing urban kitchen include electronic appliances such as fridge, oven, and cooktop, cabinets, sink, sophisticated marble shelves and floors, curtains, and lights. The ideational signs related to the architecture and interior of the rural and urban kitchens represent the former as the architecture of struggle and inaccessibility, while the latter as the architecture of ease and happiness.

The study of the semiotics of the kitchen in Pakistan suggests that on the one hand, some people have access to advanced electronic appliances, as well as electricity (U3, U5), while on the other hand, others must first buy wood, make cow dung cakes, and bring water from a far-off area to use these in their open-air kitchen (R6, R1). Many do not have taps in their kitchens. They use handpumps which may not be close to the kitchen (R5). As they cannot afford and gas is not available in all the villages and small towns, they use solid fuel for cooking which affects women's health badly (Sakib, et al., 2021). Women make cow dung cakes which they later use as fuel. They make cow dung cakes at the cattle farms which are usually away from the village. Then they bring these home (R7). Those who can afford let the peasant women do it for them. While in urban areas, kitchens are built using concrete (U3, U5), in rural areas women often make their kitchen, stove, and oven with mud (R1, R2, R4). While in the urban kitchen, especially of privileged women, one can find a hundred tools for chopping, cooking, kneading, grilling, melting, blending, baking, and cleaning, a rural woman using a traditional kitchen is neither familiar with those tools, nor that level of ease or comfort. While everything is available in the same room called the kitchen in urban areas, rural women working in the traditional rural kitchen also have to move and make an extra effort in order to access water, solid wood, and other tools. Overall, traditional kitchen spaces in the villages are unhygienic, taxing, and unsafe. I appropriate the term "overcompensating" used by Akgul (2017) to highlight how women in rural areas are doing more not only in relation to men but also urban women because they are rural women.

Within the realms of womanhood in Pakistan, the kitchen is a place of political and economic struggle, subjectification, and victimhood because it perpetuates, as well as reflects female-to-female inequalities. The semiotics of kitchen in Pakistan is a projection of the state to male and female oppression, as well as gender-based rural-urban socio-economic divide. The findings suggest that the kitchen cannot be deemed as the same cultural code for women in Pakistan. Floyed (2004) argues that while traditionally kitchen was perceived to be a space of female oppression, the postmodern kitchen due to cooking technologies enables the individual members of the society to prepare food for themselves. Contrarily, managing the kitchen in rural areas and middle and lower classes is exclusively women's responsibility and it is a space of multi-layered oppression for these women because they don't have access to those resources in the kitchen that privileged women have. In addition, in joint family systems, the kitchen is also a space of multi-layered oppression because the powerful women of the family oppress or even exclude the less powerful women.

Studying the kitchen as a semiotic space, Ledin and Machin (2018) suggest that physical and social space interact in semiosis and provide a variety of functions, such as regulating social behaviour and denoting social status. The findings of the present study suggest that the kitchen indicates unequal social status of women and discriminatory administrative and social attitudes towards them. Nixon (2017) notes that a well-equipped kitchen is symbolic of the standard of living, positioning "modern kitchens as central to healthier, more hygienic and less labour-intensive forms of living" (p. 70). It also positions women as modern housewives who don't have to deal with the drudgery of the old. The present study emphasizes that electronic consumption among other sustainable kinds of consumption can make the kitchen an empowering space for unprivileged women in Pakistan. Ramsamy-Iranah, et al., (2020), emphasize the need for an inclusive kitchen design for the elderly who are more comfortable with using traditional tools. In the Pakistani context, inclusivity in the form of availability of the tools to facilitate women irrespective of their class, region or age is also a critical issue.

The autonomy and agency of rural women are limited and conditioned as compared to urban women. They are less facilitated and underprivileged. It makes the entire structure more oppressive for them. "Structural violence, a term first coined by Johan Galtung (1969), is defined as the difference between the potential and actual physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing of persons affected" (Hyman et al., 2016, p. 2). Interpersonal violence, according to Galtung, can only be comprehended in the context of structural violence, which is systematic in nature and often remains invisible. "Expanding on Galtung's work, Paul Farmer (1999) illustrated that inequitable distribution of power and resources across different groups in society produces differential life chances that shape their everyday lived experiences" (Hyman et al., 2016,

p. 2). Wong (2014) defines structural violence as a system of interlocking oppressions exhibited in social and economic deprivation that prevents marginalized people from reaching their full physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual potential. “Structural violence embedded in public policy and social institutions is invisible and yet powerful in perpetuating interpersonal violence, which is deemed to be private, random, and individual events” (Hyman et al., 2016, p. 2). Despite the fact that Pakistani rural women work in the kitchen, fields, and factories, they are underpaid, which is a structural problem. Rural women are doubly marginalized since they frequently rely on rural men, who are likewise marginalized as a result of systemic factors. Rodéhn (2016) appropriates Connell’s (2003, pp. 102–105)

“classification of *hegemonic masculinities* and *marginalized masculinities*. *Hegemonic masculinities* are understood as a dominant form of masculinity that is connected to patriarchy and which is often idealized. *Marginalized masculinities* can be explained as the “other” or the subjugated and is often positioned in dichotomy to *hegemonic masculinities*” (Rodéhn, 2016, p. 69).

Using the same terms, ‘hegemonic’ and ‘marginalized’ masculinities in the case of women, I also appropriate the terms as privileged, marginalized, and multi-marginalized femininities in the Pakistani context. By multi-marginalized, I mean rural women who are marginalized from the perspective of western women, privileged Pakistani women, and even marginalized lower or middle class Pakistani women living in villages or small towns. The multi-marginalized have to depend on deprived and oppressed men in a system of patriarchal relativity.

We call it tradition, rural culture, and simplicity, but the association of mud, broken walls, poor hygiene, and lack of water, gas, and electricity, cannot be considered as tradition. It is poor facilitation. It is unequal access to resources. It is difficult to imagine how women living in those backward villages manage everything from dry cow dung to water and vegetables in their kitchens every day. People belonging to rural areas and/or lower social strata have been taken for granted. Their struggle has not been perceived as a struggle but as part and parcel of their life. My point is not to create a balance in a way it is not possible but at least, their basic needs can be fulfilled to maintain a reasonable, if not dignified way of living. It is the responsibility of the state to provide the people no matter where they are living with proper infrastructure, facilities, and resources. It also includes empowering them by developing their capabilities and protecting their rights in such a way that they may spend on themselves and improve their standard of living. Farmers work throughout the year but bear losses twice a year financially. The grain and fruit are exported but generation after generation the farmers and peasants keep crawling back and forth in the mighty walls of impecuniosity. Women in many rural areas are low wage workers. The state treats them like poverty is their birth right.

Conclusion

Firstly, the present study examines the forms of oppression induced by patriarchal relativity, as indicated by Akgul (2017), who claims that forms of oppression have yet to be studied within the domains of patriarchal relativity. Therefore, this study, exploring patriarchal relativity and the semiotics of kitchen as understudied areas in the Pakistani context, pinpoints that rural kitchen is a space where women are oppressed from the perspectives of dependence on men oppressed by the system, association of kitchen with womanhood, unavailability of resources by the state, and access to resources available in an urban kitchen. The study locates women living in villages and under-developed towns in Pakistan in a relationship of multilayered othering and marginalization with Pakistani and global women living in developed areas. The study reveals that oppression can be overcome with the help of a precise vision of how well a kitchen should be equipped and structured. In pinpointing various forms of oppression and patriarchal relativity, it also contributes to the existing literature on female othering and marginalization by highlighting various forms of othering of women belonging to the rural communities in Pakistan with respect to the multiple layers of patriarchy, as well as the oppressive structures they generate.

Secondly, to reflect on the multiple facets of relative patriarchy and the resulting need for empowering the women and suggesting solutions according to their conditions, the present study, highlights how state and men should, instead of oppressing and exploiting women, create opportunities and develop capabilities. Equal access to resources such as water, electricity, gas, and electronics and development of the capabilities of men and women in accessing the resources, will help the women evolve, redefined their identity, and make meaningful differences to their personal, domestic, and professional orientation. Paying attention to the semiotics of the kitchen will also help address issues faced by elderly women, expectant mothers, and differently abled women.

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