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The Journal of Cultural Perspectives - TJCP is a flagship, biannual, peer-reviewed journal of Azeem Educational Conference - AEC aec.org.pk, which focuses on interdisciplinary, problem-oriented, contextual research of human culture. The editors welcome historical and empirical inquiries of indigenous knowledge, cultural processes grounded in normative attitudes to understand and improve society. The journal encourages critical research of comparative international practices to facilitate an exchange of knowledge and cultural meanings beyond traditional biases. Cultural Perspectives offers articles that investigate and analyze the impact of culture on different institutions of social order; articles that integrate approaches from the social sciences and humanities; articles on cultural sciences in the twenty-first century; review articles on published work, theoretical innovation, and methods; and special issues that examine urgent questions in the field.

From Time to time the Journal has brought out special issues on different themes. The landmark publications have been received well by both scholars and general readers. The contributors to the Journal of Cultural Perspective include some of the most eminent scholars and thinkers of South Asia. Its audience includes scholars, policy makers, social scientists, journalists, and general readers. Intellectually rigorous yet accessible and practical, the Journal of Cultural Perspective provides an influential outlet for original scholarship in the social sciences, culture, and humanities, as well as a lively forum for commentary from cultural perspectives. Research Articles published in this journal are mandatory including end notes and bibliographies of works cited and have undergone initial editorial screening, anonymous peer review and further editorial review. Readers are encouraged to comment on research articles and essays from recent previous issues, in no more than 500 words and If the comments are published, the author of the original

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- The Journal of Cultural Perspective aims to promote and welcomes scholarly research on all branches of Cultural Studies in the widest sense as original contributions of researchers and believe in diversity, tolerance and fruitful scholarly discussions and researches.
- The scope of the Journal is deliberately given as wide a berth as possible; various aspects of Cultural Thought and Civilization, Social and Natural Sciences, and Occidental Studies, Comparative Civilizations as well as contemporary issues that interface with culture in the current geopolitical environment are addressed. Specified fields of social Studies, Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Folklore, Linguistics, Literature, Musicology, Performance Studies, Visual Arts, and Sociology are explained.
- The journal of cultural perspectives (TJCP) welcomes faculty members from various universities nationally & internationally, as well as freelance researchers to publish their manuscripts and research works related to social studies, without any racial or religious discrimination.
- TJCP publishes manuscripts and articles after double blind peer review process, which is carried out by leading scholars; Cultural Studies in order to enhance academic research which has close linkages with the society.

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Amoral Culture of Neurophilosophy; An Eliminativist Perspective

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Abstract

Every dominant ideology signifies a culture with a specific context in order to form a distinct social culture. Similarly, eliminative materialism also signifies scientific context. If it prevails and considers the preferences of individuals in their lived experiences, it will foster a sense of culture for community, as the ideological account validation of eliminativists. Eliminativism significantly emphasizes scientific descriptions of human behavior and materializes common sense elimination. Consequently, this prompts an inquiry into the problem of freewill, which raises moral obligation. Eliminativists are causally determined, this calls into question the concept of moral responsibility. It manifests that individuals are morally accountable for their conduct or maybe not. Consequently, eliminativist culture demonstrates amoral grounds, on which this paper stands.

Keywords: Eliminativism, Amorality, Responsibility, Neuroculture, Neuromorality

Introduction

The subscription of the neurophilosophy centers around issues of neuroscience and turning way of thinking (Solymosi, & Shook, 2014). The advancement of neuroscience elaborates a human is gene-coded and eco-territorial bound to act. But free actions are natural (Deery, 2021) or biological (Hadley, 2008) interactions with the environment. Humans behave not only because of their nature but also, more specifically, because of their culture (Nguyen, Le, & Vuong, 2023). Our perception and way of thinking about the world is a cultural construct, even our self is a social construct (Gergen, 2011), not an illusion (Habermas 2004). A culture is an integrated pattern that transfers knowledge to succeeding generations and gives the ability to learn how to ‘execute their actions (Paul Churchland, 1992)’. Neurophilosophers, such as Paul and Patricia Churchland lay the foundations for the constitution of neuroculture. A culture encompasses human knowledge, values, beliefs, behaviors, customs, language, ideas, codes, institutions, heritage, rituals, and creative expression that constitute the understanding of who we are and what we do (Ronchi, 2009).

Neuroculture involves neurophilosophical narratives of human beings (Lynch, & Laursen, 2009). This insight changes the human perception from mind to the brain. One of the key tenets of many neuroscientific perspectives on the mind is what brains do (Minsky, 1988). The assumption is that consciousness, freewill, and other mental states and activities can be completely explained in terms of neurophysiological processes and functional neuroanatomical structures. These neurological processes are incorporated appropriately physiologically instead of epistemological or metaphysical. All this rejects conventional philosophical and epistemological explanations of mental phenomena and comprehends the mind in terms of brain functions. This narrative considers the mind to be an emergent characteristic (Sperry, 1980) of the brain rather than a distinct thing or

substance. Further, it indicates that rather than being brought about by some sort of non-physical force or entity, the mind, and its attributes result from the complex interactions of neurons and their connections. Therefore, a scientific phenomenon should be explicable by rigorous, deterministic scientific laws and theories (Hempel, 1965). The deterministic postulation is a development where things occur by the preceding events. Truly free choices are not caused by anything, or at least nothing physical, such as brain activity (Patricia Churchland, 2013).

A person can be aware of or foresee with conviction what he will do at a specific event soon. So, he can't be aware or foresee with certainty. This frustrates the possibility of freewill of an individual that he should rest assured about his decisions or be dubious of their outcome. Yet, a person might have specific goals and endeavors. He should concede that his activities are equitably brought about by reasons. Those are unchangeable as far as the person might be concerned. Humans are responsible for their actions. To see this, just imagine a person taking food in his lucid dream. Even though we realize that in this condition one is dozing on the bed, and certainly not on the eating table. A person's food choices and odors (Mors. et al., 2018; Andersson, et al. 2021) tell the physical mechanisms of the necessities of the brain's neuronal circuits, and the brain carefully transfers the guidance to the neurons as prerequisites. It means that the physical body follows the brain, rather than a subject-object conventional relation to bring about the manifestation of the freewill.

The abandonment of freewill raises concerns regarding a person's moral responsibility, specifically whether their actions are free or not. Because culture is a format where a person can exercise their rights, such as freedom of speech or to express emotions. The concept of the freewill has forever been moral. In any case, is it an ethical inquiry question for eliminativists? It is a challenge for

eliminativists to address the problem of freewill. A determined person and a free human are two distinct characteristics. It establishes a clear line between man and machine, particularly when decision-making processes (Nisbett, and Wilson, 1977). More clearly, it is a shift toward biological determinism (Tancredi, 2007).

Patricia Churchland (2002) as an eliminativist, views it as a control mechanism of human exercise. In her assessment, an unintentional act of hitting somebody is an *out-of-control* event that occurred. Though, the occurrence of this event is a physical portrayal, rather than a choice in accordance to a person's desire. Present circumstances include that it would not have been chosen under any case. In this manner, determinism contradicts free decisions that require an honest conviction. The result of neuroculture is the understanding of how culture influences the brain further, and moreover, it seeks to grasp ethical implications for society and culture. This explains the manner in which people perceive the events, as well as the cognitive processes they employ to make decisions. It's a pattern of culture and social activity that shapes the neurobiology of the brain (Choudhury, Suparna. & Slaby, 2016). It is a neurological process that assists our understanding of actions, wishes, desires, emotions (Rolls, 2005), sense of style, and other aspects of human behavior. For instance, if we love a piece of art, there may be a way for cognition to directly affect the pleasure we derive from it. The implication is to enhance subjective pleasure by rewarding aesthetic stimuli. Of course, cognition can increase enjoyment in other ways, for as by learning how to employ the different facets of music to enhance the qualities of the reward stimuli. The better we can create enhanced emotional feelings of pleasure, the more we may be able to comprehend how our brains function (Rolls, 2012).

The more we understand the neurological implications of our actions and decisions, the freer we are. In this context, Benjamin Libet's stance as an American brain physiologist demonstrated that the brain develops a neuronal "*readiness potential*" that is thought to occur 350–400 milliseconds prior to the subjectively experienced intention to act (e.g. while raising the arm). Human actions are physical, and their decisions are neural activity (Libet et al. 1983). The manifestation of physical events is regulated by fundamental laws of physics. Physical events, in turn, are the result of cerebral occurrences (or brain events), such as rising hands, cravings, pain, and blinking.

The concept seems to suggest that if the causes of our intended activities are unreflective, then our intended action lacks freedom (Mele, 2013). On the other side, Libet's investigations of unreflective intentions might be completely compatible with free will (Byrd, 2021). According to the contra-causal accounts of freewill, decisions are made free of causal antecedents. It means, our will generates a rational decision. Since the whole, to some extent, affects the contributions that its individual components make. By and large, this process occurs in a manner, in which one thing initiates a causal chain, to generate another cause, that contributes to the occurrence of an event. Causality works, even in far-off cases. Likewise, one needs self-assurance to perceive freedom that can depict the idea of a person as a man. Wegner (2002) makes a distinction to describe conscious will. For him, it is a notion of volition, or engaging in a deliberate action, just as we attribute causality to events in different domains. We eventually evolve to attach causality to our thought processes.

If causes are events, whereas reasons are not, events and causes are not the same (Searle, 2003). There is an event or flow of events without pause from a causal nexus. It is based on the principle of causality, where one event leads to the next, occurring in a consistent and perpetual manner. A

connection exists between the two events, although their relationship is not static. Nothing happens at random; everything happens out of reason and by necessity (Freeman, 1983). The two things, at a similar space and time, cause one another. The candle is lightened by the combustion of fire that illuminated the room. It shows that Cause-A consistently comes before Cause-B and there is no discernible alternative cause. The occurrence of the thought must precede the execution of the action and must align for apparent mental causation. Thus, the unintentional act involves the contraction and relaxation of muscles within a few hundred milliseconds. This particular configuration of brain neuronal circuitry serves to validate the predictability. Natural determinism governs the nerve cells of the brain, and past events can be predicted (Popper, 1988).

Newtonian physics postulates natural laws, it is imperative to exert an external force upon an object for an event to occur. This implies causality and qualifies the causal (or natural) determinism (Paul and Patricia Churchland, 1981). This tells us that there is only one possibility to explain future actions or events, all are the result of past events (Addis, et al. 2010). To some extent, all cultures share an understanding of causal determinism. Though, predictability and determinism both have a contrary association. That association determines the occurrence of each event in an anticipatory manner, whereas human actions lack this. Human actions are contra predictive mechanisms (Scriven, 1964). If a person knows before that action. That would be contrary to its prediction. Nonetheless, contrary acts can cause predictability. Hence announcing predictability is a contrapredictive mechanism. It means, choosing not to predict action and acting otherwise. Neurological complications identify such contrapredictive mechanisms. This controlled mechanism follows deterministic laws. They work in a precise and efficient way to perform actions and explain their action. Considering causal determinism would be an accomplishment besides chaos theory, inherent in primitive human culture (Sellars, 1956).

There is no option, an event occurs before any deliberate events. Though intentional activity has not occurred before by deliberate decisions (Keller, et al. and Hehman, et al. 2015). Unintentional activity develops slowly, and the cerebrum works in this way. Thus, determinism is viable here. The constraints on human actions are a reflection of human freedom. ‘So, everything we know about physics forces us to some form of denial of human freedom’ (Searle, 1984). The causal determinist premise is true (Davies, 1980), if so, is freewill even possible? Determinism, according to compatibilists, may very well be true, but it is erroneous to think that it precludes free will. Libertarians assert that determinism and freewill are irreconcilable, yet determinism is not always true. The issue of eliminativism and freewill is a fascinating riddle for ethicists.

All the above, determinism brings an opportunity to prolong the eliminativists' cultural design. It appears to be that eliminativists talk about all living beings, i.e., humans and animals. It is very close to defining the present human, a moral entity that decides his fate. They can carry on with a day-to-day existence free of outer interruptions by others. They have ethical rights for self-assurance. It is good to make different significant inquiries. This questions the ethical spirit of the eliminativists' way of life. Regardless of whether the subjects of eliminativists' general public need responsibility. Eliminativists objectify the ethical codes of a being and its beingness (Paul Churchland, 1992). Our ethical practices are not simply built but rather just decide current realities about the world and inquiries.

Amorality

Neuromorality is the way to understand the brain functions for the process of decision-making, reasoning, and solving problems. It describes the behavior of humans in the context of their interactions with other humans. It also works at the neural connections between our brains and our

bodies. It explores the brain, its structure, function, development, injury, and behavior. This field includes many subdisciplines, including neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, neurochemistry, molecular biology, genetics, virology, etc. It is a new way of thinking about how to be ethical. This is changing everything from the way we treat each other. One can see its impact on social media, how they are constantly processing information and making decisions to understand what makes people suggest opinions or simply tick to do grocery shopping (neuroeconomics). Neuroscientifically, a person is a controlled freak, and he could be hallucinatory, or illusive (Bassiony, et. al 2000).

Traumatic condition implies that neuronal correlations are not working. And being sick, or in pain, obscures the person's approach to his/her real image of his or her activity during the *neuroimaging* process. That action can damage the future image with distorted reality. In illusions, one simply fantasizes without having a genuine image of reality. Their insight is voluntarily fixed to his/her image. Besides, if there is a state of compulsion, the person picks the best image from among his/her existing image in their memory. Criminologists suggest, because of the criminal history (Englich, and Soder, 2009), a person commits a crime. Also, the mild nostalgic condition is observed in their behaviors. Really it is hard to dispose of the memory. Memory is a warehouse that shows reluctance to their acts. For a person to behave unusually in this sense, about a particular illicit act. This precludes the person from criminal acts. He may be oblivious to his behaviors (Gazzaniga, 2005) from a defect reason to such an extent. We incur discipline as indicated by the person's deliberate bad behavior. Whenever we punish infants for breaking toys or tossing glass pots, and many others. We regret that we are wrong in our unethical behavior towards them. Since they can't manage or have less sense of their physical motor sense. Though they haven't any malevolence for us.

One who figures out his/her unusual condition is a noteworthy perspective to that person. For an individual of such stature, there exist conditions in which that person may qualify for a pardon based on certain justification (Moore,1992). In such events, a person experiences an impulsive state and no resentment during the act because he has no control over it (Glasser, 1985). Then, at that point, an uncontrolled way of behaving is considered unethical or possibly so. In this instance, ethical status would be a matter of uncertainty in relation to the criminals' behavior. The solution to our desires, convictions, wants, fears, or expectations, lies solely in regulations. These regulations, however, possess a transient nature and lack resilience. Regardless, we express our social settings through intricate and complex interactions with nature. The extent of brain states veers off from the unique design of the relationship. To bring charges against an individual regardless of consent is straightforward. Several established rules or norms are being rendered feasible for human conduct. And they are effectively depicted to furnish evidence to blame the accused.

Assuming a person's acts pose a potential danger to another person, it can be inferred that he does not have any intention of causing harm. But his belief is that it is not injurious or somehow lesser. Finally, assuming there are states of obliviousness about the act, the person lacks knowledge of the consequences that will manifest. Anything in obliviousness a person fails to reflect any moral or unethical act. It would be an ignorant act to hold a person accountable for such acts, as asserted by a faulty man (Dawkins, 2006). A person who is accused becomes subject to liability and is deemed negligent for his acts. Further, let him enjoy freedom from engaging in voluntary acts. This sort of view renders the concept of freewill viable with determinism as perceived by compatibilists. Despite this, causality serves as the immediate representative of any given activity.

This phenomenon of causal determinism makes the person determined for any ethical obligation. Which holds significance and preeminent worth for individuals. It also separates people and other living creatures, animals, fishes, etc. (Searle, 2003). If a person's acts are involuntary. It posits that either he engages in this act or refrains from doing so (O'Connor, 2002). Engaging in either of two possibilities due to an unknown causal factor results in one's accountability. The concept of possessing '*either this or that*' or possessing something '*other than this or that*' though undergone evolutionary changes. And it has transformed a person into a proficient individual. The possession of '*this or that*' or '*other than this or that*' has become a learned behavior by others (predecessors). Here eliminativists' causal determinism discards every mental state and establishes brain states. Hence, the eliminativist culture is characterized by the absence of choice in determining the old social context, thus resulting in causal determinism.

Eliminativists' culture

The aforementioned discourse tells eliminativists to refute the folk psychological terminologies and determine causal-based values while placing great emphasis on scientific terminologies. Though it qualifies as a parsimonious way to identify justified truth belief (JTB). To perceive reality, different narrations of the truth will be transformed into a simple description. While individuals create a social fabric for the deterministic approach and cultural dynamism. Eliminativists streamline their doctrine for their governing body to present it. Their wishful commandments are to:

1. Eliminate the folk psychology (old conventions).
2. Embrace the scientific laws (new conventions).

These two commandments constitute the eliminativists' theory of state, which is characterized by a neuro-political shift in the culture. If we examine this very parsimonious neuro-political constitution. The first one imposes a restriction, prohibiting the agent from acting according to the Old Testament. Conversely, the second commandment pertains to scientific baptism. The aforementioned two eliminativistic commandments choose determinism as a moral consideration. If any individual, albeit reluctantly, obeys the first rule, *to eliminate folk psychology (old conventions)*, then he possesses only choice to follow the second rule, *to embrace the scientific laws (new conventions)*. At least in science, errors can be corrected by refuting the previous hypothesis to clarify the matter. Following the elimination of folk psychology due to its perceived flaws, eliminativism becomes amoral. By attaining clearance in these two levels, an individual will gain the status of a citizen of the eliminativist state.

These two rules serve as the code of conduct or a *Magna Carta* for the eliminativists' civilization. These biamorous laws, characterized by their parsimonious ideology and fixed nature, exert an extreme influence on human life. In the eliminativist world, an individual finds himself in an immaculate and pristine terrain. He is not deemed legitimate for his conduct nor held accountable. As nothing bad has happened, neither to him nor to others, there is not any infallible condition. This represents the eliminativistic version of freedom – freedom from accountability. Hence, in order to attain an infallible state, a person is exempt from being held accountable for any misconduct. There is no space for misconduct, as the adherence to Popperian principle of falsification (1963). consequently, there are no immoral acts present. This is due to the fact that, for the eliminativists, immoral acts are solely because of the prevailing folk psychology. In a precise way, there is a lack of legislative authority at all. It's rudimentary for eliminativists to posit that in the absence of folk psychology, there is a lack of any lawful acts. This asserts that certain

aspects of ethical inquiry within that society are beyond reproach. So, if the notion of '*not good*' doesn't exist in an eliminativist society would imply that the 'good' is no longer there. Contrarily, that society would naturally exhibit progression in a linear manner.

It can be stated that in an eliminativist state, nothing would be legal. Consequently, determinism eliminates the choice of good, or bad, or right, or wrong. In this scenario, eliminativists enjoy *mutatis mutandis*, which means an amoral regime replaces a traditional moralist one. Definitely question arises of what kind of a person would be if *amoralism* were established. A person who identifies himself as an amoralist is defined not by his behavior, but rather by his actions. Typically, an amoralist is a naysayer of traditional norms and values. Thence, in the eliminativistic regime, a person will be a nontraditionalist. He will be ethically free and socially profound, to their traditional counterparts (Small, 2020).

Conclusion

This inquiry pertains to the question of whether someone would be a human (Dennett, 1993) from an eliminativistic perspective. Most of the questions it raised are still open for scholars to decide its fate. Historically, it is evident that every scientific theory communicates its social attributes, including norms, values, and the likes. And becomes the main assembly for the existing social structure in order to shape or alter it. If a theory inductively succeeds in valuing neutrality and making scientific knowledge available for collective identity (Snow, 2001), then the practical application within society establishes a culture to deliver its framework. The outcome of this process results in a paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1962/1970), to determine its progress or rejection. The Churchlands assert reality of the physical world can be affirmed through scientific means to

liberate themselves from the chains of the stale thoughts of the past. Its ramifications will acknowledge the neuroethical human or amoral human.

Despite this, every culture manages its qualities, and standards to keep its ethical stability. It has a composition of a set of rules that generates decisions and delivers a guideline for behaviors and actions to make a perception of the world. These rules are perceived as norms, which serve as criteria for ethical practice. Hence, rules are interwoven in the framework of language as signs to comprehend gestures, intentions, events, and so on. For Paul Churchland, language works as a tool, where ‘grammatical and semantic differences appear to distinguish moral from factual’ (Paul Churchland, 1992). Words and sentences are always part of larger texts, and texts, in turn, are integral to cultures that articulate diverse perspectives and those perspectives can clash within the same cultural sphere, creating a community that establishes competing worldviews (Johnson, 2020). For instance, if I go to the cinema with friends or any other activity that is part of a daily life as a fun. Critically examine that activity and one could ask, why it would be fun? Because a social group (friends) recommended it, and also it is an established norm that often people go to the cinema. Such situations and many others tell that behind scene, a culture gives us norms to interpret our actions and perform accordingly.

A human with specific skills like recalling memories, mindfulness, expectations, and comprehension could be familiar with his freedom, society's virtues, and critical thinking skills to decide. In this regard, freewill is a characteristic that plays an essential role in decision-making. It is the criterion for accountability or taking responsibility for one's actions. To explain in terms of moral responsibility, the bending of an arm or finger is a voluntary action. All voluntary actions express the freewill propositions in every culture. All that's freewill actions result in personal

freedom actualization. The nature of freewill is to detract the person from the decision-making exercise of *to-do* or *not-to-do* something. A person who knows and not-knows (Walsh, 1963), is in two states of action. As the deciding variables may not know about his activities. Do they really control their activities, or not? Do they truly understand what they are doing? Do they know (or not know), what is happening? Here 'knowing' and 'not knowing' recommends intentional stance varies (Dennett, 1987). Deliberately, one is disposing of the purposeful demonstration. The thing he is doing – is unexpectedly making haziness and disarray. That's why Hampshire (1982) is likewise giving human activity an intentional relation. This further involves the perplexing ramifications. As, our consciousness and understanding are affected by our nonsocial perception (Paul Churchland, 1992).

Humans have been observed to imitate what they learn from their surroundings. These surroundings eventually cause human limbs to become aware of their sensations. These sensations or their sensory receptors function in physical environments. These environmental factors give human imagination critical thoughts, geometry, bioscience, music, writing, and so forth.

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Literary Movements in Indo-Pak: A Study of Progressive Writers Association (1936-47)

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Abstract

The paper in hand deals with the role of played by the Progressive Writers Association in the pre-partition era of Indo-Pak Subcontinent. A breaking point came in the middle of 1930s with the appearance of the Indian Progressive Writers Association (PWA). It was mobilizing the writers of Indo-Pak Subcontinent and projecting the movement for independence by the use of pen. It was inspired by movements in Europe but was also inextricably linked to social and literary traditions that had already been developing in India. PWA was embarking on a project for cultural hegemony that was as much a literary, socio-cultural and to an extent political and political movement as well. The Association was not solely concerned with questions of literature but also with the specific role of writers who played their respective roles from the platform of Progressive Writers Association.

Keywords: Progressive Writers Association, Literary Movement, Culture, Politics, freedom

Historical Backdrop

In 1930s, Indian students studying in Europe were preparing themselves for the Indian Civil Service in order to get prestigious positions and administer the affairs of their native land. These students, studying especially at Oxford and Cambridge, had been involved in activities which focused on Indian problems. Organized in cultural societies, such as the Oxford Majlis, and the Cambridge *Majlis*, they discussed the problem of the freedom of India. These debates remained within the framework of gradual constitutional change leading to dominion status. However, during the 1920s, some of these students came under the influence of the Communist party of the Great Britain, which offered them revolutionary political alternatives, and which groomed them as communist activists to work in India. By the end of the decade, a small group of them had been gathered into a study circle based in London, which examined Indian problems from a Marxist perspective. Students such as Muhammad Din Tasir at Cambridge, Sajjad Zahir, Mahmud-uz-Zafar and Mian Iftikhar ud din at Oxford, Dr. Z.A. Ahmad, Hajra Begum, and for a short while, Dr. K.M. Ashraf in London, served their organizational apprenticeships in the *Majlis* and the recently-established London branch of the Congress (Russell, 1992).

Ralph Fox had been delegated by the Communist party along with Clemens Dutt, to conduct study circles with some of Indian students. Sajjad Zahir, Dr. Z.A. Ahmad, Mahmud-uz-Zafar, Dr. K.M. Ashraf and Hajra Begum were the significant participants in these study circles (Syed, 1988). They studied the classics of socialism together, and sought to clarify its basic principles in formal and informal discussion with Fox and other members of the Communist Party. They gathered ideas on the formation of a radical literary organization. These discussions were corroborated by British Intelligence Reports. According to the New Scotland Yard Report of 13 May 1931, “The British

Museum is becoming more and more a tacitly organized rendezvous for Indian extremists.” Similarly, another official report stated that “the Nanking Chinese Restaurant is a rendezvous for, among others, Indians of the student class” (Zaidi, 1993). In 1934, a handful of these Indians met Sajjad Zahir at his flat in London and formed a committee to organize a Progressive Writers’ Association for India. An initial draft of manifesto was prepared by Mulk Raj Anand and after necessary modifications and addition a final draft was drafted by Sajjad Zahir. Mimeographed copies of the final version were sent to India for distribution and further discussion among writers there (Ansari, 1990).

Structure of the Association

The first regular meeting of the Association was held on 24 November 1934 in the Nanking Restaurant in Denmark Street. Almost thirty-five students from London, Oxford and Cambridge participated in this historic gathering. Mulk Raj Anand was elected president. Among the founding members were Sajjad Zahir and Mohammad Din Tasir (Narang, 1991). The London Association held its meetings every fortnight. Essays, stories and poems were read, lectures were delivered. A Bengali member read a paper in English on the poetry of Qazi Nazrul-Islam, explaining its revolutionary significance. Sajjad Zahir presented his Urdu one-act play, *Bimar* (The Sick Man). The Association also published a short-lived bulletin as well (Abbasi, 1992).

On 2 January 1935, New Scotland Yard Report states that “An Indian Progressive Writers Association has recently been formed, the Secretary of which is Sen Gupta and the Committee comprised of S.S. Zahir, I.K. Yajnik and a Miss Hazra (Hajra). For the present, it is to remain purely a literary organization” (UP Gazette, 1933).

The founders of the Association were fully aware of their limitations. Sajjad Zahir, in his memoirs reflects that a few exiled Indians could do little more than draw up plans among themselves and produce an orphan-like literature under the influence of European culture. The progressive movement had to take roots in India to have any impact. The UK based members of the PWA resolved to return to the Sub-continent. They were encouraged to do so by the ideas they absorbed at the World Congress of Writers for the defence of culture, called in June 1935, at the initiative of the eminent French Writers, Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland, Andre Malraux and Louis Aragon. In the audience of thousands Sajjad Zahir and Mulk Raj Anand were mere onlookers, but the Congress inspired them profoundly. They learnt important lessons and their faith in their mission further strengthened. Writers of different beliefs and persuasions had come together to defend the right of freedom of thought and opinion, in opposition to fascism and imperialism. They realized that a similar front of diverse forces could be established against British repression in India. Sajjad Zahir also observed the presence of workers in a large number. He was much impressed because capitalist society had tended to separate writers as a group from the people, encouraging former to fear and despise the later. The gulf which separated writers from the source of life of the labouring people had resulted in the spiritual paralysis of large part of modern literature. Literature was to be revitalized by putting it in the closest possible touch with the people, and so writers had to live amongst them (Abbasi, 1992).

Manifesto of Progressive Writers Association (PWA)

The manifesto of the Progressive Writers Association, which had been sent from England, noted that radical changes were taking place in Indian society, which was bound to transform it. The

main objectives of the Association were to fight cultural reaction, and to further the cause of social regeneration and Indian freedom. It declared that:

“The new literature must deal with the basic problems of our existence today.... the problems of hunger and poverty, social backwardness and political subjugation.... The object of our association is to rescue literature and other arts from the priestly, academic and decadent classes in whose hands they have degenerated so long; to bring the arts into the closest touch with the people and to make them the vital organ which will register the actualities of life, as well as lead us to the future” (*The Hindustan Times*, 23 February, 1933).

In India, the first comprehensive statement of views on progressive movement was contained in an article “Adab Aur Zindagi” by Akhtar Hussain Raipuri. It was on the same lines as a draft circulated by Sajjad Zahir but according to Ali Jawad Zaidi, Raipuri was more explicit and comprehensive. It was presented as a manifesto at the Nagpur session of the Bhartiya Sahitya Preshad setting forth the aims and objects of the new Indian literature embodying the views of the London based progressives in their manifesto earlier. The two manifestos in essence affirmed that living literature should not only mirror life but also aim at changing it by showing the path of progress and by aspiring to serve humanity at large. It called for the preservation of the traditions so dear to us, simultaneously undertaking a critical re-examination of the traditions and rejecting all that is obsolete and unhealthy (Ali, 1974).

Indigenous Response to PWA

The idea to form an organization of progressive writers was no doubt conceived on an alien soil, but the process had started much earlier in the Sub-continent in the days of Ghalib and Sir Syed. It had started much earlier in the days of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai and Sachel Sarmast, Waris Shah

and Bulhe Shah, Rahman Baba and Khushhal Khan, Jam Durrak and Mast Tawaqqali and in the days of great Muslim Bengali traditions of 18th and 19th century. The Progressive Writers Movement was, therefore, not an imported commodity or an accidental phenomenon but proved to be the logical conclusion of the intellectual trends of the preceding epochs. It can rightly claim to have deep roots in the humanism of our national literatures of Sindhi, Punjabi, Pashto, Balochi, Seraiki and Gujrati languages, in the rationalism of Ghalib and Sir Syed, in the reformist zeal of the natural school. That is why, most of the senior writers like Tagore, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Maulana Niaz Fatehpuri, Majnun Gorakhpuri, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, Firaq Gorakhpuri, Kazi Nazrul Islam (Bengali) Gurbakhsh Singh, Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum (Punjabi), Azat Jamaldin's Anka (Balochi) and Ghani Khan (Pashto) warmly welcomed the progressive writers' movement (Russell, 1977). It is also noteworthy that the most influential Urdu poet of the 1920s and 1930s, Iqbal and the outstanding fiction writer of the same period, Premchand, had raised their voices against imperialism and in favour of the poor and the oppressed (Premchand, 1986).

It is also worth mentioning that Tagore welcomed the PWA in the following words:

“To live in seclusion has become second nature to me, but it is a fact that the writer who holds himself aloof from society cannot get to know mankind. Remaining aloof, the writer deprives himself of the experience which comes from mingling with numbers of people. To know and understand Society, and to show the path to progress, it is essential that we keep our finger on the pulse of Society and listen to the beating of its heart. This is only possible when our sympathies are with humanity, and when we share its sorrows.... New writers must mix with men, and recognize that if they live in seclusion as I do, they will not achieve their aims. I understand now

that in living apart from Society for so long I have committed a grave mistake.... This understanding burns in any heart like a lamp, and no argument can extinguish it.” (Zaheer, 1952).

The preparations for the first conference were underway. Sajjad Zahir visited Lahore in January 1936. Mahmud-uz-Zafar and Dr. Rashid Jahan helped Zahir to forge contacts with the Punjabi writers. Faiz, a young lecturer, at MAO College Amritsar, was approached for contacts in Lahore. In a small literary meeting, Sajjad Zahir explained the manifesto and answered some objections of religio-political nature. Finally, Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum was provisionally elected as the secretary of the Lahore Branch of the PWA, which soon developed into an articulated organ of Marxian thought in literature in the Punjab and NWFP (Trotsky, 1987).

An active part in the formation of PWA was taken by the young generation of Punjabi writers, those who had grown up in the period when the Punjab and other parts of the Sub-continent were witnessing important shifts in the balance of social forces. During the First World War, large number of Punjabi Youth was recruited into the Anglo-Indian army. They were Sikhs, and Muslims, and Hindus, all fighting for alien interests mainly i.e., for the British imperialists. They returned not only enriched with life-experience, especially in the political sphere, but also with some knowledge of the revolutions in Russia, Germany, Hungary, and aware of the criminal senselessness of the wide-scale massacre initiated by the British rulers. Back in the Punjab, they became active fighters for independence. In the meantime, the young Punjabi workers were gathering strength, displaying increasing activity in the national liberation movement in which the left-wing revolutionary forces held key positions. In the period between 1919 and 1922, when the freedom movement was at its height in the Sub-Continent, Punjab stood in the vanguard of the movement. This was particularly stimulated by the savage reprisals perpetrated by the Colonialists

against the participants of a peace meeting in Amritsar on April 13, 1919, an event that roused all India to indignation (Malik, 1967).

The mood among Punjabi freedom fighters was growing increasingly radical during the 1920s, and in the 1929-1933, when the national-liberation movement was soaring high. It was leavened with socialist ideas that were penetrating in whole of the Sub-continent, and frustrated by the achievements of socialist construction in the Soviet Land. The effect of all this was particularly notable among a group of young Punjabi writers. The movement launched by the PWA was strongly welcomed by them. Lahore became the centre from which the movement of progressive writers spread across the country.

The First Conference of PWA in India

The first Conference of PWA was held in Lucknow in April 1936, under the presidentship of Premchand. Hasrat Mohani was also present in the conference. Premchand delivered a highly evocative presidential address:

“I am not advocating the vague egocentric view of ‘art for art’s sake’ but desire to emphasize the qualities of a good creative writer, if he (the writer) found his fellow beings around him being stifled and shackled by social customs and traditions, he should feel perturbed over their plight and should endeavor to liberate them from thraldom and poverty.... His artistic excellence would be determined by the truth and sincerity with which he responds to the pains and agony of his age” (Premchand, 1986).

Premchand was more explicit about the traditional concept of beauty and exhorted writers to discover beauty in the struggle for the common man for his livelihood.

“Beauty did not lay in the painted faces, lips, cheeks and eyes of women laden in perfumes. It was their fault if they did not discern any beauty in a woman who sweats in the fields.... Behind her withered lips and scorched cheeks lie the beauty of selflessness, devotion and hardship.....” (Premchand, 1986).

Hasrat Mohani, was more forthright in the denunciation of exploitation and urged the progressive writers’ movement to stand by the struggle for national liberation and to oppose the imperialist powers and the tyrannical capitalists. They should defend all the workers, peasants and poor humanity. Mere progressivism was not enough, he wanted literature to reflect socialism, and communism as well. In his opinion, Islam and Communism were not mutually exclusive. Impelled by the democratic urge of Islam, Muslims should oppose tyranny, and endeavor to set up communistic system in the world (Hussain, 1989).

During the Conference, Ahmad Ali read a paper on literary criticism in which he maintained that Iqbal and Tagore, were reactionaries. On the last day, the conference was also attended by Jai Prakash Narain, Yusuf Mehr Ali, Indo Lal Yajnik, Kamla Devi and Mian Iftikharuddin (Kaviraj, 1995). The manifesto approved at the Lucknow Conference laid down two major objectives: to free Indo-Pak (Sub-Continent) from British rule, and to bring literature into the closest touch with life. The Constitution was also approved at the Conference, and was adopted with minor changes at the second All-India Conference at Calcutta in December 1938 (Coppola, 1975). Syed Sajjad Zahir and his friends were gratified that the Conference was successful, their goals defined and a prototype devised for the establishment of a network of progressive Association in the country (Russell, 1992).

The immediate reaction to the Lucknow Conference was not very favorable in certain quarters. The daily 'Statesman' of influential spokesman of British interests in India took exception to the PWA on political grounds. It charged the PWA with inciting the people against the Government, creating hatred between various classes and preaching violence and bloodshed. The paper suggested that the PWA was a result of the conspiracy hatched in London and in fact the Communist International was at its back (Syed, 1988). A warning regarding PWA was immediately issued from the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, to all local governments:

"I am desired to address you in connection with an organization known as the progressive writers' Association known as the progressive writers' association. This association held its first conference at Lucknow simultaneously with the annual session of the Indian National Congress in April, 1936. Since then, S.S. Zahir and other members of the Executive Committee have been active in forming local branches of the Association and such branches are known to exist in Aligarh, Allahabad, Andhra, Calcutta, Delhi, Gujrat, Hyderabad (Deccan), Poona and the Punjab. This Association owes its origin to an Association of the same name formed in London about a year ago. The London Association is closely connected with and to a great extent controlled by the British Section of the International Union of Revolutionary writers. The Association is, however a typical example of the methods, now being pursued by Communists in all countries in accordance with the current policy of the Communist International. This method is for a few convinced and trained communists to establish contacts with all sorts of organizations and societies having interest in intellectuals, cultural and social subjects with the object of spreading communistic ideas and gaining converts. Its development should be watched with some suspicion and that it should be approached with caution by individuals who do not wish to be involved in

extremist left wing politics. Suitable opportunities may be taken to convey, preferably in conversation, friendly warnings about this association to journalists, educationists and others who might be attracted by its ostensible programme.” (UP Gazette, 1933).

Widening the Circle of PWA

The years between 1936-39 were full of promise as “new ideas and revolutionary movements” appeared on the Indian horizon (Zaidi, 1993). The All-India Conferences of the PWA discussed literary problems, laid down practical tasks for its members and decided the broad political and social alignments of the association in the light of the national and international situation. The first conference, for instance, discussed issues such as the nature and purpose of literature, intellectuals and cultural reaction, and the problems of Hindustan (Ansari, 1990). At the second conference, it was decided to disseminate the ideas of the progressive movement. The resolutions passed at the four All-India Conferences-Lucknow (1936), Calcutta (1938), Delhi (1942) and Bombay (1943), revealed the political colour of the organization: the construction of a new social order based on equality, freedom and peace was proclaimed; the anti-cultural forces of Fascism and militarism were condemned; British proscription of radical literature and its suppression of the press and other civil liberties in India were protested against; British imperialism was blamed for ‘the exploitation of India’, the deliberate neglect and suppression of its cultural growth, ‘the illiteracy of the vast number of people, the decay of arts and the comparative backwardness of Indian literature; solidarity was proclaimed with the forces fighting reaction Fascism and Imperialism in Germany Spain, and China; writers were urged to ‘help the forces of International peace’ by entering into working alliances with other progressive forces (Narang, 1991). Local PWA units probably did the most productive work of the Association. It was at these meetings that problems of literary

criticism, of the need of progressive writers to participate in the freedom movement, of attitude towards literary heritage, and of the value of propaganda and aesthetics in Art were discussed exhaustively (Abbasi, 1992).

Akhtar Hussain Raipuri suggested that the members of the Association must spend some time with the peasants or workers, so, that they come into direct contact with the people. Not all the progressive writers agreed entirely with these views. Faiz argued that since in India the majority of the workers were illiterate, they were hardly in a position to write about their own problems. Under these circumstances, only the prosperous, who were also educated, could dare to expose the fundamental injustices of society.... Faiz rejected the obsession of progressive writers with workers and peasants, and asserted that it would be worthwhile in itself if they could only communicate their message to the middle classes for at least these classes could think about the issues and understand their importance. The debate continued right up to partition and generated considerable heat inside the organization. The more dogmatic group, spearheaded by Ali Sardar Jafri, continue to argue for a close physical and intellectual proximity between the writers and the masses, while the rival group, in the initial stages led by Ahmad Ali and later by Faiz, Akhtar Ansari and Sajjad Zahir, opposed it (Ali, 1974). The PWA, however, laid greatest stress on making the widest and deepest possible connections with the people. For instance, the close relations, which the PWA attempted to establish with peasant organizations, were best illustrated by the decision of the Punjab PWA to organise its annual conference in April 1937, to coincide with the annual festival of Baisakh, organised by the Punjab Kisan Committee. In terms of peasant participation, Sajjad Zahir considered the conference a great success. Similar efforts were made to organize activities which would appeal to the urban working poor (Russell, 1977).

From Imperialist War to the People's War

It is commonly said that during the initial phase of World War II, Nazi Germany and Soviet Union were allied and cooperated in the dismemberment of Poland. The PWA now changed its strategy and, the erstwhile Fascist powers were lauded as allies of the Soviet Union and Britain singled out as enemy of freedom and democracy. But when Germany attacked the Soviet Russia in 1941, the same British imperialist was hailed as an ally of the forces of progress and humanity symbolized by the Soviet Union. The Government of India and the PWA made strange bed-fellows. It is stressed that without any qualms of conscience, the PWA switched over its loyalties and took a leading part in manning the propaganda machine of Government of India. Obviously, PWAs political and intellectual orientation was conditioned by the demands of its loyalty to the Soviet Union. PWA's political somersaults compromised its literary credibility and gave a convenient handle to the freedom fighters both Muslims and Hindus to expose the double standards of the Communist Camp-followers of the Soviet Union. Thus, it is concluded, PWA's high flaunting claims come to dust (Zaheer, 1952).

This is not the whole truth. No doubt, until the outbreak of the Second World War, the PWA pursued vigorous anti-fascist policies based on Socialist arguments which identified Fascism as an extreme and more brutal form of imperialist capitalism. It is also true that the anti-British policies of the PWA were consistent with their anti-fascism abroad. In their view, there was no difference between Fascism and British imperialism. Under these circumstances, it was not easy for members of the PWA to justify the Non-Aggression Pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in August 1939. By a twist of logic, they perceived it as a purely tactical move, design to protect the Soviet Union from being consumed by the imminent war, the major responsibility for which lay

at the fact of the allies and their struggle for world domination (Trotsky, 1987). These were the days, when the Government of India was not prepared to tolerate Indian opposition to its war effort. Soon after the outbreak of war, the Government severely attacked the PWA. Many of the Association's members were arrested.

Government attacks set off disputes within the organization itself. Among some of the members felt that the PWA was a literary organization and its sole task was the creation of literature. Thus, there would be no harm if under the existing circumstances the PWA remained aloof from politics. The Delhi branch of PWA favoured this view, and to prove the 'literary' and 'non-political' nature of the Association. Shahid Ahmad Dehlvi, the secretary of the branch, invited the inspector of the secret police to attend the branch's functions and meetings, and to judge for himself its purely literary nature and intent. This decision, which had been taken without the consent of the membership, created immediate turmoil in the branch. Dehlvi resigned and the branch faded away (Malik, 1967). This period was known as 'the Imperialist phase' to socialists in PWA. When, on 22 June, 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union, this caused great confusion among them. The question was: Should PWA continue with its popular front policy of Cooperation with the Congress against British imperialism, or was it necessary now that the Soviet Union had joined the War on the side of the allies to support the Allied war effort in the hope that the defeat of fascism would change the balance of international power and so help India to achieve freedom (Hussain, 1989). In July 1941, progressive writers who were members of the Communist party of India, held fast to, and supported the united anti-imperialist front (Premchand, 1986). Two months after the German invasion, the Communist party of India continued to call it an 'Imperialist' War with which Indian should have no part. The matter was debated for several months. The majority of the Communist, who were in detention thought that it had become their moral and political duty

to proletarian solidarity to support the Allied War effort now that the Soviet Union had come under attack (Kaviraj, 1995).

On contrary, the members, who were not in detention, were reluctant to make a clean break with the nationalists, particularly, since the Congress also welcomed Anglo-Soviet cooperation against Hitler. By December 1941, supporters of the people's war, encouraged by the Communist Party of Great Britain won the debate. With the threat of Communist disruption to the war effort removed, the British Government gradually released leading communists including leading members of the PWA, and secretly negotiated with them about how the communists could help in the war. Agreement was reached, and the Communist party of India was declared legal on 24 July, 1942 (Coppola, 1975). The final break between Communist party members and the Congress came when its communist members voted against 'Quit India' resolution in August 1942. The PWA vehemently criticized the Congress leadership for having committed national suicide. They also praised the Muslim League for having boycotted 'the Quit India' campaign (The Hindustan Times, 23 February, 1933).

There was a lot of Controversy within the PWA. In December 1942, Saghir Nizami and Josh Malihabadi, in a statement condemned both British Imperialism and Japanese Fascism. Israrul Haq Majaz in May 1943, took upon extreme position in this respect and called on the people of India to participate in the war of independence, meaning the second world war. Faiz and other Muslim progressives joined the Indian army. As Faiz mentioned, when "Russia joined the Allies.... the imperialists decided to recruit the youth with progressive and left-wing ideas. Before me, Majid Malik had joined the Army. He phoned me and said, Faiz, come into the Army, you are needed. I went immediately. "In the army, Faiz provided valuable suggestions for propaganda to motivate

the troops to fight, not as a mark of loyalty to the British but as a patriotic duty to the homeland (Syed, 1988).

There were further divisions in the ranks and file of the PWA. Sajjad Zahir and Dr. K.M. Ashraf supported the war while non-communist progressive writers disagreed with this tactic. Ali Jawad Zaidi and some others expressed their opposition to unconditional support for the Allies. Akhtar Hussain Raipuri could not reconcile himself to the British war effort, and resigned his job at All-India Radio as soon as the 'Quit India' movement began (Zaidi, 1993). It is interesting to note that a draft, attacking both British imperialists and fascist as culprits, which was prepared by Khawaja Ahmad Abbas, had been approved at the fourth conference of PWA, held at Bombay in 1943. The pro-war members of PWA had, by now, been thoroughly discredited and were stigmatized in Congress leaflets as hirelings of the British rulers.

The Parallel Journey of *Halqa-i-Arab-i-Zauq*

The *Halqa-i-Arab-i-Zauq* (Circle of Men of Good Taste), founded in September 1939, was organized as a parallel movement. The tone of this somewhat pretentious title captures very well the lofty disdain that they generally felt for their numerous contemporaries who had not been blessed with good taste. Their quarrel with the progressives stemmed from their view that art and propaganda were mutually exclusive, and that art must be for art's sake alone. (It must be said that some of the men of taste made the opposite mistake and assumed that anything that was presented as a poem and was clearly not propaganda must therefore be art) (Ansari, 1990).

Many objections were raised against PWA by a section of writers on the ground that:

- Forming an association of writers amounts to their regimentation, thus encroaching upon their freedom and forcing them to write to order;
- Writers should not commit themselves to any particular thought system nor should they get involved with the social, political, economic or moral issues agitating the society;
- Writers should be accountable only to their own selves and express only their inner thoughts and feelings;
- Masses are just a rabble, therefore, not worth consideration. Only the elite creates culture, art and literature (Narang, 1991).

Some of the writers holding these views, formed *Halqa*, with main object to counteract the PWA influence and keep young writers occupied with new experiments in form only. The new movement coincided with the First World War. On 29 April 1939, Sayyid Naseer Ahmad Jamee, Sher Mohammad Akhtar and some of their friends got together and set up *Bazm-i-Dastan Goyan* (the Society of Story Tellers). The meetings were held in rotation in the houses of its members who served tea to the participants. Since the *Bazm* enlarged its areas of interest from short story to literature, accordingly its name was changed to *Halqa-i-Arbab-i-Zauq* in September 1939 (Abbasi, 1992). The aims and objects of the *Halqa*, were set forth in a succinct five points statement. They wanted to:

- i. Promote and propagate Urdu;
- ii. To provide encouragement and entertainment for young writers;
- iii. To protect the rights of Urdu Writers;

- iv. To foster sincerity and spontaneity in literary criticism; and
- v. To rectify the prevalent unsound condition of Urdu literature and journalism (UP Gazette, 1933).

Unlike PWA, the *Halqa* had no pretensions of launching mass contact movement, or engineering a revolutionary class struggle. Since the *Halqa* had no mass appeal, its literary activities were confined to a small, elitist, rather an exclusive literary group. Only writers and poets of merit or promise, as Yunus Javed claims, were admitted to its membership. The *Halqa* maintained a rigorous discipline and took care to enroll only suitable writers as members. The applications for membership were closely scrutinized and only those who in their opinion, possessed literary merit and showed interest in *Halqa* were accepted (Ali, 1974). It is interesting to note that the leaders of *Halqa*, with their tone of regimentation, kept pending and rejected several applications of writers like Zia Jullundhry, Mubarak Ahmad and Hafiz Ludhianvi. The *Halqa* held their meetings regularly on every Saturday evening. In 1944, the YMCA Hall Lahore was fixed as the venue of *Halqa* meetings. Recital of poems and reading and short stories was followed by criticism, often rambling, sometimes pungent and scalding relieved by streaks of perceptive remarks or humorous sidehights (Russell, 1977).

Halqa, referred to by some as Modernists or Experimentalists, had built up a following and had in its fold poets like Miraji, Noon Meem Rashid, Dr. Taseer, Yusuf Zafar, Qayyum Nazar etc. (Zaheer, 1952). Rise of the *Halqa* was spectacular but the gains of this trend are more on the technical and formal side. It revived free and blank verses which were first tried around 1910 by the Dilgudaz School of Sharar (Lucknow). To compensate for its innovations, it often sought to vary the erotic theme to accommodate the sensuous and the outspoken sex, perversion or

ambiguity. In the writings of some, the faint ripples of political or social ideas can also be heard but it is introduced usually to provide escape through criticism. Unlike the English models, the new verse libre in Urdu was 'predominantly metrical' and to that extent did not do much offence to the traditional poetic aesthetics. From Tassadduq Hussain Khalid to Miraji onwards, it appears to be an extension of the immediate past. Despite the slender link of the experiment with the past, the popular reaction to it has been extremely halting. By stages, the opposition to the new wave softened and its youthful votaries were 'forgiven' for the innovation which they dared in their search for new modes of expression. There were, however, many unkind insinuations at the temperament behind the expression (Trotsky, 1987). Although the *Halqa* has not produced writers and poets of great stature, it has rendered valuable services in its own right. Miraji, Nazar and Yusuf Zafar were the best product of the *Halqa*. Under their influence, it developed into an effective cultural and literary forum.

Anwar Sadeed places Miraji as the true ideologue of the *Halqa*, who occupied the same position in the *Halqa* as Sajjad Zahir and Faiz did in the PWA. During 1940-47 the *Halqa* emerged, as Anwar Sadeed maintains, as a first-rate literary body. As a result of Miraji's involvement, the *Halqa* advanced on the road towards literary progress and innovation. The *Halqa* also reacted against the purposive stance of the PWA and brought about variety in the midst of monotonous uniformity. Gradually, the *Halqa* was transformed, concludes Anwar Sadeed, into a movement that was determined to alter the existing situation and to highlight the inner beauty of art' (Malik, 1967).

The *Halqa* and PWA, both the organizations provoked many important debates on important subjects. The progressives, however, had a well-knit ring of critics, who were unsparing, in their

criticism of the reactionaries, escapists or master craftsmen of technique, who failed to reflect the inner struggles which should inspire the verse of the day. Whatever way we try to look at the picture, the literary scene, though rather hazy and crowded, was being progressively dominated by the progressives (Hussain, 1989).

Conclusion

To sum up, the activities of the Progressive Writers Association reached to its peak and it took the turn as an active literary movement in the subcontinent. Prominent writers and intellectual like Allama Iqbal, Maulana Hasrat Mohani and Munshi Premchand and Mulk Raj Anand continued to give central importance to the theme of imperialism as a big menace for the agrarian human society of Indo-Pak especially. Syed Sajjad Zaheer and his peers were trained by the literary grace of the same creative intellectuals and became involved in study circles of the Association. Sajjad Zaheer was one of the writers and poets who founded the association in London at the beginning of the third decade of the 20th century. Along with this, Dr. Muhammad Din Taseer and Professor Ahmed Ali were also active participants in the debates and deliberation of this literary movement. Indeed, no movement emerges suddenly, but social, cultural and economic conditions intervene in its emergence. The effort of the Association gradually became a global move with many philosophical underpinnings. It left long-lasting impact on the socio-cultural environment, literature and literary development of Indo-Pak.

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Socio-Cultural Constructs of Masculinity and Gender- Based Violence: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

This study examines how cultural constructs of masculinity contribute to gender-based violence (GBV) in the Pakistani context. Using a feminist social constructivist paradigm, it investigates how cultural norms and expectations influence masculine identities and behaviors, which perpetuate or reduce GBV. This study draws on interviews with 12 participants, including 6 males and 6 females respondents, aged 20 to 30, from diverse socioeconomic and regional backgrounds in Pakistan. The study employs thematic analysis of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with university students, identifying key themes such as dominance, emotional suppression, and societal expectations of aggression. According to the findings, society's endorsement of harmful values of

masculinity and control contributes to the ongoing GBV, while stifling the possibility of other forms of masculinity which are non-violent. This study is important, because it brings out cultural factors that contribute to gender-based violence in Pakistan, thus providing an insight on how societal characteristics breed toxic masculinities. With the aim of addressing such constructs, it seeks to promote gender equity and lessen gender violence. Further research also supplements development studies through emphasizing that cultural masculinity operates in wider societies and culture and this opens the way for strategies on GBV that are multidisciplinary in nature. This research shows how culture and violence are interlinked and calls for specific action to counter unhealthy masculine ideologies and practices and promote gender equality.

Keywords: Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Masculinity, Cultural Constructs, Feminist Social Constructivism, Culture, Toxic Masculinity

Introduction

GBV is a worldwide problem that has affected millions of people, irrespective of their age, ethnicity, and sex (Inter-agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises, 2010). The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that intimate partner violence is experienced by 1 in 3 women worldwide, often driven by rigid gender norms and expectations. Apart from being a violation of human rights, it has repercussions that go beyond the personal, family, and even societal scope. In this context, the construction of masculinity can be seen as potentially one of the risk factors for GBV. It still sustains attitudes and behaviors that have their origins in concepts of power and aggression which together builds and nurtures mindset where violence against women and other minority genders is upheld (Fleming et al., 2015).

In the context of Pakistan Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a significant issue. In Pakistan, these global patterns intersect with unique socio-cultural constructs of masculinity deeply rooted in patriarchal traditions and religious interpretations. According to the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 2017-18, 28% of women aged 15-49 reported experiencing physical violence, and 6% reported sexual violence. Spousal violence is particularly concerning, with 34% of ever-married women reporting physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Alarmingly, over half of these women do not seek help, primarily due to socio-cultural barriers, lack of support systems, and economic dependence.

In Punjab, GBV data from 2023 highlights a sharp rise in violence against women, with 10,201 cases reported under PPC 354 and PPC 509, a substantial increase from 2022. Rape remains a pressing issue, with 6,624 cases reported in the province, translating to a woman being raped

approximately every 45 minutes. Lahore emerged as a hotspot, with 1,464 cases of violence and 721 rape cases (Correspondent, 2024).

Historically and culturally, masculinity has always been defined solely by strength, power, control, and aggression (Malonda-Vidal et al., 2021). This has made men believe and at the same time given them the margin to use violence as one of the most prominent ways of asserting their authority in society. Societal pressures often drive men to adhere to traditional notions of cultural masculinity, which emphasize dominance and aggression. This, in turn, normalizes and perpetuates violence in various forms, reinforcing toxic behaviors among men (Makhanya, 2023).

In the view of Lomazzi (2023), GBV and masculinity have been intertwined throughout history as the foundation for the creation of social norms and the continuation of power and oppression. Despite the negative impacts of human rights violations resulting from GBV, little research has been done on it up to this point. GBV encompasses a variety of behaviors meant to harm or regulate others, affecting all social classes with women and girls as primary victims. This includes all forms of mistreatment such as domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking in persons, and harmful traditional practices like child marriage or female genital mutilation (World Bank Group 2023). The core problem is located at the intersection between prevailing discourses over manhood; that normalizes violence against women as well as other marginalized genders. Masculinity defines an array of anticipations, norms and actions associated with being male in a given community (Burn 2005). Such ideals usually devalue those traits seen as feminine or weak while highlighting aggressive ones like coercion power or domination. From a young age, people are socialized into these gender roles which affect their interactions with other people, especially in close relationships as well as how they see themselves (Khan, 2023).

This research article aims to establish a relationship between how masculinity is influenced by cultural forces and how it can either increase or diminish gender-based violence in Pakistan. This research adopts a qualitative research method to establish the relationship between cultural masculinity, power, and oppression in the perpetration of violence against women and non-binary people. In addition to that, it would aid in separating misandrist thoughts and counteracting the socialization process whereby violence has been normalized to become part of Pakistani culture for men. In addition, this study will enhance our understanding of the cultural influences characterizing Pakistan to identify the trends that facilitate the manifestation of gender-based violence in society. Addressing harmful stereotypes around gender, and embracing positive forms of masculinity could inform efforts at preventing violence from happening in the first place while making them more individualized and sensitive towards variations.

Methodology:

This research study adopted a qualitative research design through conducting semi-structured interviews with students from the selected public sector universities from Islamabad, Pakistan including Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad, International Islamic University Islamabad and National University of Modern Languages Islamabad. The interview guide was pre-tested with 6 participants to ensure validity and reliability. The interview guide was revised based on the feedback of pilot testing. This helped identify areas where the interview guide could be more concise and effective in getting desired information. After that, six males and six females respondents were selected who hailed from different socio-economic backgrounds and that allowed exploration of the variation in perceptions as emanating from the lived experiences of the respondents. A research tool in the form of an interview outline was employed to enable the

respondents to state their opinion about masculinity, its definitions in particular culture and its association with violence against women. These interviews were conducted in Urdu to alleviate the comfort of the respondents with the language and their audio-recorded consent was secured before the sessions. Data was analyzed using Braun and Clark's six-phase framework of thematic analysis. It involved categorization of data using codes that were developed and altered throughout the analysis process using Microsoft Excel for organization and categorization. The resulting themes were then related to the aims of the study in order to augment understanding of the relationship between masculinity and violence with illustrative quotes of participants for expanding the debate on gender relations and change in society.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the causes of gendered violence by exploring the culture of masculinity within the Pakistani.
2. Identify how cultural norms and expectations relate to masculine identities and behaviors, and how these contribute to either increasing or decreasing Gender-Based Violence (GBV).
3. Discuss the connections between masculinity and GBV, illustrating that by internalizing particular cultural masculine norms, GBV occurs.

Results and Discussion:

This study analyzed the cultural constructs of masculinity and their connection to gender-based violence (GBV) in Pakistan, using a feminist social constructivist framework to explore the societal norms and behaviors perpetuating toxic masculinities. It highlights how masculinity is culturally constructed, why it fosters aggression and dominance, and its potential consequences

for GBV. Feminist social constructivism suggests that gender systems and cultural norms, including masculinities, are established and reinforced through societal expectations, language, and practices.

The primary objective of this research was to identify the factors shaping masculine identities and their relationship to GBV. Specifically, the study analyzed

- (i) The cultural norms and practices that shape masculine behaviors.
- (ii) The implications of these norms on perpetuating or reducing GBV.
- (iii) The role of societal reinforcement, such as language, familial expectations, and peer influences, in sustaining or challenging toxic masculinity.

Men and Masculinity: A Moral Asymmetry

This section delves into the moral double standards that exist in Pakistani society concerning men and women, particularly in the context of behavior in public spaces. Masculinity is often associated with a freedom that allows men to act without facing societal judgment, while women face constant scrutiny (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This perceived moral asymmetry reflects deep-seated gender norms and societal expectations, shaping how masculinity and femininity are performed.

Male Participant 1 shared, *“We can sit anywhere we want, talk about anything we like, and be loud without restrictions. Individuals do not seek to confront us because of cultural expectations around being a man.”* Similarly, Male Participant 6 emphasized,

“We are men, we don’t face such counters. We can be loud outside and sit or wear whatever we want. I usually wear shorts and feel at ease. People ignore us because it is normal and common for men to act this way.”

However, Female Participant 4 explained, “*Unlike men, Women are assessed by their dresses, giggles, or behavior in public space.*” Female Participant 6 added, “*Societal norms still have more moralistic expectations on women and require women to regulate their behavior constantly.*” The female participants agreed that societal observation requires women to be careful since any perceived inappropriate actions will trigger questions related to their upbringing and family values.

But the male respondents are well aware of such disparity, and one shared, “*If girls acted just like men in public, they would be branded liberal or from weird backgrounds.*” This double standard lets men act out toxic or aggressive masculinity without facing repercussions, simultaneously to restrain the freedom of women.

This moral imbalance underscores how the social order justifies aggressive masculine behaviors while controlling and stigmatizing women's actions (Delgado-Herrera et al., 2024). Such asymmetry reinforces harmful gender stereotypes, which will continue to perpetuate inequities that allow toxic masculinity to thrive and limit women's freedoms. In achieving this goal, society must acknowledge such double standards and work to redefine norms to be more respectful of gender equality.

The Masculine Landscape of Work: Suppressing Career Choices of Men

Participants keenly stated the fact that cultural expectation plays a significant role in determining men's professional choices, often making them pursue careers regarded as masculine. Male 3 pointed out that “*Men often choose careers that will pay well to feed their families, even though it is not something that really goes by an individual's passion.*” He also added that “*Society puts a definitive line between 'masculine' and 'feminine' professions.*”

Male Participant 1 explained how, culturally, careers such as engineering, business, and law fit the masculine mold because they require attributes of strength, leadership, and technical capability.

Female Participant 2 expanded on the idea that careers in such fields as law enforcement, the military, and other physically demanding careers are often resigned to males, reflecting the attitudes at the time where men were seen to possess more physical strength.

Male Participant 5 said that

“Professions that demand resilience, for instance, business and politics, are usually accepted as men's jobs. He argued that such jobs are related to qualities like resisting stress and having strength which conventionally were associated with men, and meanwhile, women would be regarded as "too dainty and fragile" for similar straining circumstances.”

Male Participant 6 revealed the same perspective by pointing out that jobs requiring strength, long-lasting travel or nighttime work, and that among them fall the police, military, and legal professions, are coded as fundamentally masculine territories.

On the other hand, Female Participant 1 added that careers that focus on being a caregiver and having a nurturing role are usually pushed to women, such as teaching and nursing. Similarly, Female Participant 6 stated that *“Outdoor and technical careers are construed as jobs that are most appropriate for men.”*

Male participant 4 shared his personal experience saying, *“Society decides careers that a man should pursue before birth.”* According to him, he was labeled into a career before he was even born; the parents expect boys to grow up and become engineers, even though he wanted to be a singer and likes mathematics. When he ultimately chose psychology, a profession considered

female-dominated, he faced criticism and backlash from his family and peers. He noted that even today, he occasionally encounters disapproval for his choice of major, reflecting the societal stigma attached to men pursuing roles outside traditional masculine norms.

This theme points out how social norms are limiting the options of men, by forcing them to be inclined to occupations that fit societal expectations of masculinity, and in the meantime devaluing or stigmatizing alternative options.

Masculine Role as Breadwinner: Earning Power and Respect

This theme examines the power dynamics in gender relations; it focuses more on the social mandate that situates males as the breadwinner. Traditionally, the male role as breadwinners has been related to ideas of respect, power, and identity (Manchester et al., 2018). As all respondents attest, the male's capacity to earn usually marks his value not only in personal relationships but also beyond them within the larger society. For Male Participant 1 quoted,

“Men face major pressure to raise enough money and support their families, since they are respected only if they bring home their earning. This assumption is further continued by the cultural myth that an “unearning man” is undesirable.”

Female Participant 2 added that men are socially expected to be breadwinners, and often, behaviors like lack of morals or even abusive conduct are tolerated if they are providing financially. This sentiment resonates in the view of Female Participant 5, who pointed out that when a man brings home money, even his success in a field considered "feminine" often goes unquestioned. Society tends to turn a blind eye to the field of work, focusing only on the financial success, which reflects

a double standard in societal expectations. The way people treat rich versus poor men further underscores this inequality. As Male Participant 5 stated,

“People’s opinions change when they see wealth, regardless of the man’s occupation.”

Female Participant 6 stated that

“In today’s society, money is everything. A man’s financial success is linked to his social approval, as men are admired and respected for their earnings, no matter the circumstances. However, this financial pressure can sometimes lead to crises of identity, as men often base their self-worth on their ability to provide.”

As Male Participant 6 shared, when his career interests didn’t align with high-earning potential, he was pushed toward a medical career instead, highlighting the tension between personal passion and economic necessity.

Masculine Dominance and Control: Dynamics of Interpersonal Relationships.

This theme delves into the notions of dominance and control in relationships, where men often feel the need to exert power over their partners. Dominance refers to male influence over decisions, action, and direction in relationships, while control refers to the regulation of their partner’s behavior as well as autonomy (Johnson et al., 2012). Male Participant 1 said, *“Young boys are often influenced by figures who advocate for male domination, where men are supposed to be protectors and defenders.”*

Female Participant 2 associated this expectation with dominant mainstream masculine norms of aggression and strength for men, as they were likely to dominate and defend their territory. However, as Female Participant 5 pointed out, in most situations, males act aggressively when

their control is perceived to be challenged or when their needs are not met. This indicates how fragile the control can be; if insecurity or vulnerability is ascribed to them, then control, the much-valored norm, may be compromised.

In other families, as Male Participant 6 posited, full financial responsibility and also family decisions are believed to be solely men's issues, which explains why men are the head of the family. This belief, however leads to discrepancies in power relations, whereby women are excluded from decision making in regards to financial matters, which often deprives them of freedom of choices. This trend is also spotted in social setups, whereby, as Female Participant 1 observed, men do discourage their wives from establishing social relations outside the home. The imbalance of power in both financial and social spheres underscore the dominance men assert in intimate relationships.

Love, Care, and Affection: Masculine Emotional Suppression

The cultural regulation of men's emotional expression is a key theme here, focusing on how men are expected to suppress emotions like love, care, or vulnerability. In many cultures, including Pakistani society, emotional restraint is seen as a masculine virtue. Participants discussed the societal expectation for men to hide their emotions, as emotional expression is often perceived as weakness. Participating female number 1 stated that

“Men are generally advised not to display love or joy because such emotions are thought feminine and feeble.”

Female Participant 2 described that men are conditioned to bottle up their feelings, especially when they are in a vulnerable state and should ask for help. Instead, he is expected to face it alone. This

strengthened the view that he needs to be emotionally insensitive and aloof, further separated from his emotional needs. However, when talking about sentiments like anger or aggression, Male Participant 4 and Male Participant 5 believed that there are dominant social expectations that generally embrace that type of act as part of masculinity, but emotional openness is generally not appreciated.

Female Participant 6 stated: *“There are double standards in display of emotions between men and women. While more often than not, anger or even actual aggression among men is tolerated, display of love or even sadness is often conceptualized as a sign of weakness and nonsensicalness. Women, on the other hand, are supposed to be emotional, and the tears of women are taken lightly as just dramatic.”* This dichotomy creates a sort of restrictive environment among women and men, with men expected to fulfill strict emotional boundaries that, in the long run, eventually influence their mental wellbeing.

The issues studied here reflect highly ingrained gender roles that shape masculine identities, personal relationships, and emotionalization in the modern world. While men are called to be in control and powerful in financial and social dimensions, they still face restrictions on their emotional expressions resulting in a dualistic framework of expectations that is bound to enable and restrict their experiences (Hentschel et al., 2019). Traditional masculinity, therefore, is strictly constricted and built upon societal pressure to fulfill the role of breadwinner, dominate in relationships, and suppress emotions.

Aggression as a Masculine Virtue: Socialization of Violence

Aggression is that kind of behavior which is hostile, destructive, hurts or dominates others. It can be expressed as physical, verbal, and emotional, and probably due to frustration, fear, anger, or a need to dominate. Female Participant 1 said,

“Most aggressive behaviors are of anger, dominance, or physical aggression.” She explained that it stems from societal or cultural pressures to appear tough, unresolved emotional issues, or a culture that normalizes violence. She recalled and stated that *“Her grandmother would teach her younger brother not to cry when teased by classmates but instead to resist and act aggressively. This, she noted, is how aggression is ingrained in men from childhood, encouraging them to express their anger through physical or verbal outbursts.”*

In Pakistan, aggression is commonly displayed by men through yelling, breaking things, and even physically abusing women. Domestic violence is widespread and often viewed as normal (Madhani et al., 2015). As Female Participant 2 shared, *“It is not uncommon for men to use physical violence against women for trivial reasons, and this behavior is often seen as a normal way for men to express frustration or anger.”* Male Participant 6 added that aggression is often seen as a way for men to assert dominance and control over a situation or to protect their ego. He further added that men are traditionally expected to embody traits associated with masculinity, such as strength, assertiveness, and aggression, which are culturally linked to male dominance.

Masculinity and Verbal Violence: Language of Disrespect

Verbal expression involves spoken or written language used to convey thoughts, feelings, or ideas. In the context of masculinity, men in our culture often use foul language and derogatory slang as

a normal part of their conversations. Male Participant 1 revealed that in conversations with close friends, words like “Mother fucker” and “sister fucker” are common, along with derogatory terms such as “khusray” (transgender) used to insult boys who cry or engage in behaviors considered effeminate. This language is normalized, and they do not feel bad or offended by it. Participant 5 Male shared that

“Using abusive language is a routine part of their conversations, and they do not take the literal meaning of these words.”

Female participants noted that this disrespectful language is often directed towards women, reflecting ingrained misogyny in the culture. Female Participant 2 shared that the derogatory terms used by men are disrespectful to women and can often be heard in public spaces, particularly when conflicts arise. Female Participant 6 shared that

“Men are loud and carefree when using such language, and society does not call them out for it. Instead, women are expected to ignore such incidents and maintain peace. This reinforces the culture of misogyny, which manifests through derogatory language and negative attitudes towards women.”

Proverbs and other cultural sayings also depict the prevalent disrespect towards women. Female Participant 2 observed that one of the common sayings in their culture is, *“Women lack brains and are weak.”* Female Participant 6 further observed that one other which was more commonly heard was: *“There is no blessing in a woman's earnings.”* Such sayings continue to perceive women as inferior and undervalue what they help accrue, particularly about monetary earnings (CADTM, 2018).

Theme 8: The Glorification of Violence: Storytelling and Myths

There is always a problem when violence is perpetrated within the model of masculinity. Cultural tales, be it religious texts or historical accounts, often glorify aggressive male behavior during conflict, asserting that this behavior was necessary, or on occasion even virtuous. Male Participant 5 admits that these are cultural stories that they may go on perpetuating the cycle of violence; violence becomes a response to provocation or threats against one's social status or honor: A cultural saying by one of the participants, Male Participant 5, echoed, *“A husband can beat his wife and also sleep separately. A man should always keep his wife in control.”* This shows how much society tolerates violence as a means of exerting control within households.

Student Female 2 told a personal anecdote in which she elaborated on how social norms make the man to show anger and hostility through bodily violence and not patience. She recalls how her grandmother taught her younger brother not to get angry but to reciprocate with aggression against aggression, indicating how violence becomes a way of solving conflicts. At one point, Student Female 5 said during the interview, *“Men are often taught to show anger by yelling, breaking things, and physically abusing women. This behavior is seen as acceptable in Pakistan, where domestic violence is prevalent and often justified as a normal way for men to express frustration.”*

Female Participant 4 added that in their society, men are told that they are naturally prone to anger, and women should tolerate it. The expectation is that women should bear the brunt of male anger and violence, with the blame always placed on the woman for not managing the man's temper. The justification for male violence in these contexts is often framed as being for the woman's own good, for the sake of the children, or to maintain peace within the family (Childress et al., 2023).

This reinforces a patriarchal narrative that places the responsibility on women to endure violence for the sake of familial harmony.

Masculine Ideals and Violence: Role of Media

Media plays a significant role in shaping and reinforcing masculine ideals in contemporary society. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are often criticized for glorifying toxic masculinity, with male figures who promote disrespectful and harmful behavior towards women. Male Participant 1 shared that *“Such platforms often idealize men who mock women, reinforcing submissive gender roles and anti-feminist narratives.”* Male Participant 4 emphasized the media's influence in portraying men as powerful, aggressive, and even violent, creating a cultural expectation that masculinity is linked with physical dominance and aggression. This portrayal of men as violent heroes, seen in movies, TV shows, and video games, socializes aggressive behaviors as part of being masculine, perpetuating cycles of violence in social interactions (Huesmann, 2007).

Female Participant 3 highlighted that *“In Pakistani culture, media often showcases masculine role models like actors Ranbir Kapoor in *Animal* and Shahid Kapoor in *Kabir Singh*, who emphasize strength, dominance, and emotional restraint. These portrayals reinforce the belief that a “real man” must be tough, emotionally detached, and dominant.”* Furthermore, Male Participant 4 criticized social media figures, such as influencers and religious leaders, who promote traditional ideals like multiple marriages, often presented humorously, which further propagates outdated and harmful views about masculinity.

Female Participant 2 pointed out the dual nature of media, where it both glamorizes aggression, as seen in wrestling or violent films, while also providing spaces to raise awareness about issues such

as domestic violence. However, Male Participant 4 observed that the Pakistani drama industry rarely addresses the impact of violence, even though physical and domestic violence is commonly shown and normalized in these shows, particularly in family dynamics where slapping is portrayed as a means of restoring peace.

Pressure to Conform: Burden of Toxic Masculinity

Toxic masculinity is defined as socially constructed behaviors that perpetuate violence and inequality and creates immense pressure on men to conform to a rigid definition of manhood that prioritizes aggression, emotional suppression, and physical strength (Sheppard, 2023). Male Participant 1 shared and reflected on how societal norms dictate that men should embody traits like seriousness and toughness, which can have negative emotional consequences. Male Participant 4 expanded on this, explaining that the pressure to be the "strong silent type" can harm men's emotional well-being, making it difficult for them to express vulnerability or build healthy relationships. When we view emotions as something to be controlled, we can tend to withdraw, become angry, or even suffer from depression. Quote from Male Participant 2 states that *"It is common to mock and call boys who do not conform to such masculine ideals, girly."* He also stated that this is what happens in the family as boys are praised for being rough and strong while effeminate behaviors are ridiculed. Ideas put forward by Male Participant 5 put more emphasis on this societal tendency; he remembers how guys with feminine voices or mannerisms would be mocked and called "a third gender", especially in gatherings. Male Participant 3 remarked that *"There are men that the society considers men, but they do not fit into the appropriate box of masculinity and therefore they must work hard to be appreciated and accepted."*

As stated by Male Participant 4, toxic masculinity not only drains men emotionally and socially, but it also contains societal perspective that there is a need for all men to be emotionally hardened, aggressive and physically superior, even when such qualities are impossible to attain and beneficial to their psychological and emotional wellness. Female Participant 3 networked Weaved concerns *“This stress often causes mental problems, breakdown of relationships, and aggression as a means of control.”* Male Participant 3 described how, to be considered ‘normal’, boys are expected to hide certain emotions such as sadness, fear, etc. which causes them to feel very lonely and stressed. Male Participant 6 also commented that *“These obsessive engagements with unrealistic masculine standards destroy the health outcomes and psychological maturation of males.”*

Reshaping Masculinity: Role of Education and Awareness

Education and awareness play a significant role in the reconstruction of masculine ideals towards healthier and more expansive horizons. Male Participant 1 stated that *“while QAU he was exposed to gender equality and feminism and it changed his perceptions of masculinity.”* He further explained that This change came about as a result of study sessions, book reviews and discussions regarding gender justice.” Male Participant 4 continued that *“Education made him part of the gender parity for men and women and that is how now he take outings with his sisters as everyone deserves the same opportunities regardless of the sex.”*

Female Participant 2 noted with emphasis that even her brother or the boys around her have started to be receptive to the gender issues discourse that she has experienced a transition to progressive that is more inclusive. Female Participant 4 acknowledged that *“Education and awareness is sufficient to encourage a better understanding of masculinity, and that indeed a lot of young men today will be able to disagree with the restrictive definitions of masculinity.”* Male Participant 1

went on to explain how social networks, most especially Facebook, have helped himself and many other people shift their notions of what it means to be a man from the old ideals of aggression and stoicism to an understanding of manhood that celebrates emotional health, nurturing relations, and gender balance as essential aspects of proper

Every single person present, inclusive of women participants, was of the opinion that there is a role of education and raising consciousness that helps young boys to join the struggle in the fight for gender equality and that in the end changing masculinity from being toxic and emotionally suppressed to more open and positive ways (Van Laar et al., 2024).

Conclusion

The current research on the cultural construct of masculinity and aggressiveness against women provides insights into the dominating traditional masculinities, clannism, and media, which are majorly responsible for violence and discrimination. Feminist social constructionism has also acknowledged the importance of factors under institutions and society, which foster rather than eradicate the belief that masculinity must be associated with values of aggression, dominance, and suppression of one's feelings. The results confirm these stereotypes are prevalent as media especially movies, and social media, portray aggressive men as ideal and process aggression as a positive and inherent aspect of men.

The study also illustrates how the pressure to fulfill s dominant masculine identity and the acceptance of the same can also be detrimental to the mental health and interpersonal associations among men. The overweighting effects of toxic masculinity, in addition to hindering people to express themselves emotionally, also encourage violent acts and masculine toxic traits in both private and public relationship settings.

The main focus that adds this specific piece of research's significance is assess how it is possible to bring a change on the existing gender dynamics and views through education and awareness. The study underscores the importance of developing spaces that promote emotional literacy, equality between the genders, and a range of masculine identities that go beyond the harmful notions of masculinity in enabling the healthy opposition of masculinities. These concerns can be addressed within the educational context and through the media and traditional values can be shifted in favor of more positive approaches resulting in a better and fair society.

This study is limited by a small sample size with a focus on only university students of Islamabad, which might not fully capture the experiences of other age groups and rural population. Future research could address this gap by incorporating a large age diverse sample. Finally, the research emphasizes on the importance of constant discussions and measures, both on the individual level and community level.

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Campus Sustainability Discourse of Universities – A Critical Review

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Abstract

The concept of sustainability has not been established enough to gain the status of a scientific model and worldwide acceptance as a unified signifier with the same semantics. Institutions, especially higher education institutions, have been redefining it to achieve their goals. A democratic ecological and social order is the main connotation of all the definitions. There is a risk of becoming merely a new term devoid of substantive meaning in the discourse of sustainable development. This article aims to explore the diverse connotations it holds via various studies to illustrate the mammoth significance it embraces. There is a lack of specific criteria and incisive discussions within the higher education institutions seeking sustainability in Pakistan. This research article circumspectly examines the fundamental role in both developed and developing countries such as Pakistan through the qualitative method of narrative review of previously written articles, book chapters, web links and conference papers. After the discussion and critique, certain gaps were identified and suggestions are given to foster a clear discourse of campus sustainability in general as well as in the context of Pakistan.

Keywords

Higher education campuses; sustainability concepts; discourse; sustainable development; Pakistan

Introduction

Defining “sustainability”

The uncompromised ability to meet the present needs without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to fulfill their own needs (Brundtland, 1987) is the most popular and widely followed definition to date, having the “cradle to grave” approach to sustainability (Butler, Henderson & Raiborn, 2011). After that, various definitions sprung up, but they did not problematize the concept of sustainability discourse since the three dimensions have been agreed upon by almost every school of thought related to “the economic, environmental, and social responsibility” (Lopez & Martin, 2018, p. 1). This agreement clearly shows that the three most significant dimensions of human ecology, i.e., social, physical and financial are considered in most definitions.

Starting from the very simple definition of balancing these basic dimensions that lead to the “well-being” of any ecology, it connotes the discourse of “future development and life quality” (McKeown, 2002, p. 8). Though it is widely used across scientific fields, particularly in environmental sciences, the concept’s evolution remains complex (Leal Filho, 2000) while dealing with misconceptions related to sustainability. This complexity may stem from its abstract nature, lack of ownership or clear agency, too vast scope, lack of profitability, or perceived lack of scientific rigor (Leal Filho, 2000). It refers to the point that there is either underutilization or overutilization of the accepted criteria depending upon the choice of the stakeholders of the particular contexts.

In general, sustainability is viewed as a process aimed at maintaining balance within an ecosystem, making it a neutral term that emphasizes maintaining life harmoniously. Sustainability varies across different disciplines, and the term “sustainable development” adds further ambiguity. There

is a noticeable lack of clear and straightforward definitions in the literature on sustainable development (Raza, et al., 2023). Some approaches emphasize frameworks or processes, such as: addressing needs, managing resources, and understanding complexity and limits (Quental, Lourenço, & da Silva, 2011). This perspective focuses on the process rather than the result of the efforts of that process. Sustainable development is viewed as ensuring sustainability for future generations by offering principles and solutions to environmental and societal challenges and promoting positive change. We need to recognize that human society is inherently dynamic, adaptive and interactive with its complex environment, which is incapable of remaining static (Bossel, 1998; Barbosa, Drach & Corbella, 2014). So, the ideas of ‘balance’, ‘maintenance’, and ‘durability’ generally associated with sustainability seem to be context-dependent and ever-fluctuating.

Accordingly, the sources are highlighted in the definitions, e.g., Jabareen (2008) identified seven sources that define sustainable development: “ethical paradox, equity, global agenda, eco-form, utopia, integrative management, and natural capital stock” (Gibson, 2000, p. 11 as cited in Waas, Hugé, Verbruggen & Wright, 2011, p. 1640). Development in terms of these sources seems wholesomeness, but it is not free from paradoxical orientations. This discussion can provide context and highlight areas of relative strength or weakness. There have been a few studies defining campus sustainability clearly, especially in the context of higher education in Pakistan. This article bridges this gap and highlights major focal points in the campus sustainability discourse. The main research questions of this study are as follows:

Q1. What are the common narrative and dominant themes in campus sustainability discourse?

Q2. How do campus sustainability initiatives reflect or challenge broader societal sustainability discourses all over the world and especially in Pakistan?

Q3. What types of sustainability initiatives are most commonly implemented in university campuses (e.g., energy efficiency, waste reduction and transportation)?

It is vital for administrators and educators at institutes of higher education to understand how sustainability definitions are tied to an institution's goals, visions, ecology, and social and material circumstances. This study reveals major viewpoints, research findings and frameworks regarding the concept of sustainability and the key measures needed for the campuses in Pakistan.

Research Methodology

Design and Sample

The relevant topic or subject-specific databases were reviewed e.g., Google Scholar, Scopus, etc. peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, web links, and conference papers published in English. More than 300 papers were read to get an overview. They were carefully filtered keeping in mind the research questions of the study. Finally, only those studies were included that meet the eligibility criteria. (Sukhera, 2022). This study follows a narrative review where existing literature is presented and critiqued to develop an inclusive understanding of the campus sustainability discourse.

Methodology

The narrative review, being synonymous with terms like *traditional review*, *narrative overview*, *non-systemic review*, and *un-systemic review* (Geibel, et al., 2016; Jesson & Lacey, 2006), is

preferred as a research strategy due to its flexibility and practicality. It provides a framework for general background, and critiques research. Interpretations are offered by all types of narrative review which allow critique and variations depending on the context and the authors as they “do not offer an evidence-based synthesis for focused questions, nor do they offer definitive guideline statements” (Sukhera, 2022, p. 416).

A review article is of various types. The two classifications are of traditional or non-systemic or narrative review and systemic review (Potter, 2004; Jesson & Lacey, 2006; Geibel, et al., 2016) while Green et al. (2006) noticed only three basic types of review: *Narrative review*, *Qualitative Systemic review* and *Qualitative Meta-analysis* (Sukhera, 2022, p. 17) .

Data collection and analysis Techniques

Data extraction was done in terms of different research designs, methodologies, different sustainability discourse themes, ecological or geographic focus, and mostly key findings or conclusions. Gaps were identified in the existing literature. Note-taking was done and collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, trends, and understudied themes or geographic regions or lack of interdisciplinary research. Findings were integrated to identify areas of consensus, arguments or implications for research, policy and practice.

The potential output of this study presents a comprehensive review probing the conceptual frameworks for understanding sustainability discourse. This led to the identification of research gaps, future directions, and contributions to policy and practice debates.

Discursive diversity in sustainability discourses

The concept of sustainability (SD) means different things to different people, organizations and think tanks which determine the focus of such discourses as they facilitate the legitimization of sociopolitical agendas. Several global environmental governance scholars have identified four major sustainability frames prevalent in Stevenson and Dryzek's (2012) categorization (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2006; Clapp & Dauvergne, 2011; Hajer, 1995; Stevenson & Dryzek, 2014), saying "mainstream sustainability, progressive sustainability, a limits discourse, and radical sustainability" (Sénit, 2020, p. 415).

Such discourses are usually exercised by the administration, policy, and decision-makers who are responsible for different framings of sustainability at the government or private sector negotiations, creating discursive diversity of global policymaking and influencing the discourses evolving in the public space (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005; Stevenson & Dryzek, 2012; Dryzek, 2000 as cited in Sénit, 2020, p. 415).

A conservative approach, "mainstream sustainability", focusing on both economic and political areas, holds the global or institutional powers responsible for decisions and regulations about change and progress. Environmental sustainability has to be catered to keep the political and economic resources in view. Transformation is only possible through technology and market dynamics promoting industrialization, job opportunities, profits, and investments. Sustainability in growth is achieved through the commodification of nature, as an external factor to the human world, providing services and benefits to the economy (Sénit, 2020, p. 416), and Pakistani HEIs take it seriously.

On the other hand, progressive sustainability carries a conservative approach toward economy. Redistribution of power by putting the developed and developing countries is important for development. Equity is achieved through both government and civil society regulating energy conservation and efficiency giving economic incentives and funds for technology transfer and investments to developing countries. Economic growth, being still the central focus, is coupled with the conservation of nature which is still commodified for the purpose of sustaining development gains (Sénit, 2020, p. 417). It is considered very weak in the system of Pakistani HEIs.

The third type, a limits discourse is a politically conservative but an economically reformist approach to sustainability. Globally, the redistribution of power is not needed and governments or civil society can take charge but a revolutionary reorientation of the economy, and usually the concerned authorities or volunteers take charge of the positive changes and maintenance of environmental sustainability. Ecology takes the driving seat to allow or constrain, both economically and demographically the development of human societies (Sénit, 2020).

Fourth, radical sustainability is a thoroughly transformative approach aiming to revolutionize the existing global economic and political systems and strive for equity of human rights and justice in society. It strongly adheres to environmental sustainability and limitations of ecology personifying 'Nature' as part of human societies and not an external factor as a commodity. It advocates for small-scale community development while working on enabling all types of rights like human, social, economic, and even the rights of nature, motivating collaboration or initiatives (Sénit, 2020). Both limits and radical types of discourses are invisible forms in Pakistani HEIs.

The acceptance status of agents or actors involved in this discourse has always put various limitations. The progressive sustainability is the most favored in the framing of issues but one of its drawbacks is that it fails to provide the framing of the optimum level of social responsibility and equity in the negotiations about global sustainable development challenges and the subjective issues of various marginalized areas or groups cannot be addressed. The frequency of such framings is also less in radical sustainability and a limits discourse (Sénit, 2020).

Discursive representation of negotiations of sustainable development goals has shown the biases of actors or communicators involved in global policy making e.g., the developing countries were given more prominence and presentation opportunities. Civil societies are not very functional as framing the consensus discourse at the global level is mostly done by the state governments (Sénit, 2020).

Sustainability in higher education

The concept of sustainability has become a widely accepted and popular notion in higher education institutes all over the world. The sustainability concern in education is quite important in the American context as Weisser (2017) points out that there is an Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) which includes more than 800 universities and “the higher education sustainability movement supports an ever-expanding number of trade journals, national conferences, and other mechanisms to promote campus sustainability” (pp. 1076-1077).

Translating this concept of sustainability to gauge the quality of higher education varies regarding different contexts. The term *sustainability* in the academic, social and private sectors is commonly emphasized in the context of maintaining the balanced coexistence of humanity and the

environment (Robinson, 2004). Contrastingly, the business and government sectors often replace it with *sustainable development* connoting the “process of development” through economic growth (Hector, 2014, p. 12) which often refers to the means or process to achieve the target goals. Some take it as a utopian concept relating it to Romanticism portraying nature’s sacred and harmonious relationship with humanity (Hector, Christensen & Petrie, 2014), an aspect that is largely absent from the idea of “sustainable development”. This synchronization is often deemed essential by most of the schools of thought for the assessment of sustainable measures and including it in their discourse despite their status of being fuzzy buzzwords with multiple interpretations.

In the higher education scenario, the term ‘sustainability’ emerges as a key concept in motivating research and the administration, faculty, and students to work towards environmental and energy challenges (Cortese, 2003); *sustainability* often aligns with that of *sustainable development*. As a result, these terms are used interchangeably. The UN highlights the significance attached to this area, especially for the developing countries. Along with framing the organizational policies, the employment of the theme is the most challenging as it is not just awareness activities but involves composing and integrating inter-disciplinary content, value system, teaching and creativity.

University definitions

It has become a common trend among universities to show ‘sustainability’ as part of their main vision, mission or goals, though emphasizing different aspects and definitions. “Sustainability is a ubiquitous term in higher education, appearing frequently and prominently on a wide range of university websites, flyers and other public documents” (Weisser, 2017, p. 1083) Most of the Pakistani universities do not have a definition of sustainability clearly expressed in their manifestos or websites. Moreover, even if they have shown it on the websites, this is the same definition of

UN reports represented as their goals till 2030. Collocating the term *sustainability* with *campus* means involving the institutional structure with economic, ecological and energy-related initiatives (Emanuel & Adams, 2011).

Significant trends

University definitions of sustainability follow the preexisting ideological framework of sustainability used at official and government levels usually following the “three pillars” metaphor — *education, research, and service*. Rather than seeing this concept as an add-on or isolated project, this broadens the scope for institutional leaders to view it as essential to the core mission of universities. The association of environmental responsibility with economic benefits; innovation, technological problem-solving, and social responsibility are some of the most common trends. The notion of time in the definition of sustainability is quite unique as

“Many university texts make use of narrative to suggest and reify a temporal orientation: a schema of past, present and future saturates university literature on sustainability. The past is often envisioned as a site of memory, reflecting a rhetoric of loss, return and recovery. The present is conceived as a moment of crisis and choice, rhetoric of exigence marks this narrative trope” (Weisser, 2017, p. 1085).

The universities’ sustainability discourse carries an element of temporality and it reveals a great deal about our collective vision of the world and the ways in which the term shapes and limits the enactment of potential futures” (Weisser, 2017, p. 1085). The recent development of new models and indicators of sustainability shows interesting moves and shifts e.g., green neighbourhoods, waste management, sustainable urban development, campus sustainability, reduction of carbon

footprint, as well as developing country-specific sustainability evaluation index (Olawumi & Chan, 2018, pp. 37-38).

Deleye (2024)) presents a comprehensive empirical analysis of the discursive construction of the concept of the *sustainable university* through a vast array of scientific literature by examining 4,584 publications. Highlighting the three primary discourses: *the sustainable higher education institution, the engaged community, and the green-tech campus*. The study is insightful as it frames the sustainability discussion within three actionable, distinct and relatable categories. This framing was built on prior research, connecting existing theoretical frameworks from Henderson et al. (2017), Findler et al. (2019), Leal Filho (2011) and Lozano et al. (2015), creating a six-domain framework of university sustainability engagement.

Studies

Sustainability communication in higher education institutes encompasses a formal outline and plans about core issues, dialogue with the concerned stakeholders, and taking proper steps to activate changes in lifestyle. This type of communication consists of much more than mere one-sided dissemination of information. It also includes the discourse of sustainable development as a “narrative construct in which the discourse serves to frame and perform specified sustainable actions” (Newig, et al., 2013 as cited in Musso, Pinna , & Carrus,, 2021, pp. 237-238). For example, it involves motivating people to adopt new technologies, related to transport, cleaner production, materials; convincing them to be responsible and transforming their behavior” (Bucur & Petra, 2011, p. 48 as cited in Musso, Pinna & Carrus,, 2021, pp. 237-238).

Language discourse about sustainability practices on university websites of U.S. was studied by examining the university mission statements which elucidate that there is a greater plausibility of

higher sustainability ratings of those universities that use a more number of specific terms in their mission statements. Religious affiliation and the type of sector (public/private) of the institutions are significant factors and the private sector or nonreligious-affiliated institutions are more prospective in terms of the inclusion of sustainability concepts in their mission statements (Lopez & Martin, 2018).

In the Italian universities' context, a study about using social media to communicate sustainability by using the method of content analysis selecting the posted sustainability messages from the list of the Italian University Network for Sustainable Development was carried out. It confirms three main functions of universities' social media concerning sustainability communication, i.e., disseminating information, facilitating action and fostering community creation. The results reveal that universities mainly use social platforms for action-oriented communication. (Musso, Pinna, & Carrus).

Though websites are the main discourses of marketization, it has been found that the verbal and non-verbal signifiers promote the university not only by giving information but also by creating a sense of achieving a new lifestyle and personal transformation or values that adhere to campus sustainability discourse not in the sense of particularly academic activities but in the sense of the frames of personality grooming, values, well-being, new experiences or exposure. A study on the website of the National University of Singapore over 14 years analyzed visual-spatial features and action potentials of progressive versions of the site. It reveals that the changing discourses of marketization are being transformed in the website functions. From exhibiting information about their unique features/services/resources and academic expertise "to addressing potential students as consumers of goods and of products offered by the university" (Zhang & O'Halloran, 2013, p.

468) and now “the website pointing not so much to education as a process of learning and mentoring but as a type of lifestyle, experience, and abstracted personal transformation and journey” (Zhang & O'Halloran, 2013, p. 468).

Campus Sustainability Discourse in the Context of Pakistan

Three different perspectives about the discourse of sustainability are in vogue i.e., communication *of* sustainability; *about* sustainability; and *for* sustainability. The first type has the intention to persuade by transmitting information, whereas the second type involves dialogic processes providing space for debate on opinions and exchange on sustainability issues (Newig, et al., 2013 as cited in Musso, Pinna & Carrus, 2021).

Communication for sustainability is the practical type of discourse instructions about how this information and opinions would be put into action. The crucial role of campus sustainability movements must not be denied as it “finally raises some important ethical, technological and ecological questions about the environmental role of the university” (Weisser, 2017, p. 1077).

Exploration of the role of private sector was aimed at a study in the Pakistani context that probed the views of the faculty members working in private sector HEIs in Punjab and found that they have a critical role in the advancement of sustainability. In Pakistan, this concept is still in its early stages with limited research attention. All the participants in that study recognized private HEIs in Pakistan as hubs of knowledge-generation with the potential to drive the sustainable development “through faculty training and active involvement of all the stakeholders and action-oriented research” (Waqas, Rehman, & Rehman, 2019, p. 19). However, their progress is impeded by several significant barriers, including limited funding, a weak research culture, faculty ineffectiveness, and insufficient management support to foster innovative solutions for sustainable

development, it was suggested to utilize resources in terms of creating conducive classroom environments, implementing effective curricula, leveraging appropriate technologies, focusing on solution-based research, and developing robust infrastructure (Waqas, Rehman & Rehman, 2019).

Effective leadership with technical, interpersonal and professional development skills is the ingredient that is considered to be the most important in the achievement of sustainability goals in HEIs across private and public sectors. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives within HEIs can also support societal and environmental change. Private HEIs show a stronger grasp of sustainability across social, economic and environmental aspects, as well as excelling in student development, community engagement, and fostering social values in contrast to public HEIs. However, private HEIs in Pakistan face challenges, such as limitations in sustainability investments, teacher competency, and classroom learning approaches (Hinduja, Mohammad, Siddiqui, Noor & Hussain, 2023).

Integration of the SDGs in ADPs (Annual Development Program) could be an effective measure on yearly basis, and it may become a focal point of discourse in Pakistan. Vigilant research, policy-making and development mechanisms, effective course designing, monitoring and implementation are considered indispensable for maintaining sustainable measures in Pakistani HEIs (ul Hassan, 2021). The researchers emphasize that higher education institutions (HEIs) alone cannot address quality and equity issues; support from the state, parents, funding agencies, and professionals is essential. The sustainability vision for Pakistan includes consideration of social and political stability i.e., “Pakistan Vision 2025 document has five enablers and seven pillars. The five enablers comprise political stability and continuity of policies, shared vision, rule of law, social justice, and peace and security” (ul Hassan, 2021, p. 64).

Most of the researchers concluded that a conceptual understanding of ESD, emphasizing its role in enhancing the quality of life and educational quality for all stakeholders—including parents and students—can drive sustainability efforts in higher education. Progress is noted in campus operations and outreach, with HEIs focusing on infrastructure, energy efficiency, waste management, water, transport, food, grounds, and pollution prevention. Outreach efforts include web-based sustainability initiatives, community projects, awareness campaigns and problem-solving activities (Hinduja, Mohammad, Siddiqui, Noor, & Hussain, 2023). These themes are useful to formulate localized goals for Pakistani higher education ecology.

Discussion & critique

Weisser (2017) reviewed the rhetorical uses of the term among various institutions within the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), especially in US higher education. The findings of his study revealed the similar fluidity or elasticity in the university definitions of sustainability as those of the political and public discourses whereas specific trends “in which concepts of interconnection, technological problem-solving, and temporality persist in definitions of the term in higher education” (p. 1076) were also found out.

In the recent years, the higher education sustainability movements have promoted campus sustainability through a number of mechanisms, activities, academic scholarship, journals and conferences. Contemporary education system has not only given us a better life style and higher progress level but also concerns about well-being and balancing the ecosystem. It is due to its drawback that it has taught us to meddle with or dominate nature more than to be concerned about maintaining these life systems (Orr, 1992). This is one of the main reasons that highly educated and qualified people bear more responsibility of carrying out an effective discourse about

sustaining not only of their campus systems but also of the society and ecology in which these systems exist.

It has been observed that many institutions formulate their own definitions based on local goals and contexts, as Katherine Owens and Sasha Legere concluded that there is ambiguity among scholars, professionals and policy makers as they state different definitions and conceptions of the term *sustainability* (2015) leading to “a kind of disconnect between choices in reality and a “sustainable’ future” (Owens & Legere, 2015, p. 380). Various groups or individuals compose definitions of sustainability that is suitable for them according to their intended objectives which guide towards the following material and intellectual actions needed to be carried out on those lines. The term sustainability “has become a plastic but potent signifier” (Alaimo, 2012, p. 559) signifying related assumptions, ideologies, visions and perspectives in higher education.

The term *campus sustainability* carries relative agendas and ideologies in various definitions of sustainability. One university might focus on campus planning and development to follow sustainable measures. Yet another one sees the projects and initiatives as cornerstone of sustainability such as green building initiatives, campus greening drives, recycling or energy conservation programs. Some universities might view sustainability in terms of economic and financial concerns while others emphasize sustainability through corporate measures (Weisser, 2017). The variation is due to the current structure of academic institutions where they are basically unable to address sustainability properly (Miller, Munoz-Erickson & Redman, 2001).

Some critics and scholars see this term as part of *cultural keywords* which reflect the beliefs, ideologies, and power structures of the respective culture (Williams, 1977) because they are “the servants of too many interests to keep to single, clearly defined jobs” (Richards, 1994, p. 23). It is

often observed that most definitions of sustainability have their roots in Western culture. The term was first used in German forestry studies in terms of utilizing the forest resources for current and future generations. It has the potential meanings of conserving natural ecosystem but also utilizing it to satisfy human needs, social or political stability, and the role of technology and knowledge in utilizing the resources (Weisser, 2017). It has been widely associated with environmentalism but, in fact, the very essence of the language of sustainability calls for a positive change in every field of life.

In the corporate language, a famous phrase is *people, planet, profit*. Coined by corporate responsibility advocate John Elkington (1997), this interrelationship among the environment, society and economy, are in a reciprocal relationship with each other, and is covered in the concept of sustainability. One largely accepted principle is ‘equity’, which is commonly acceptable in all sustainability definitions with always a positive connotation (Dixon & Fallon, 1989).

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Peter Goggin talks about narratives of sustainability as a part of social and political influence as an “important issue for ordaining change towards an ecological future on local and national levels, serving distinctive interests and political pragmatism (Goggin, 2009). The perception of the term ‘sustainability’ thus has become a signifier which keeps on changing the meaning according to local ecology and context as “sustainability can be seen as a floating signifier.... Groups and individuals attempt to fix meaning to the term, thereby gaining hegemony over it,..” (Weisser, 2017, p. 1082).

Language and discourses are largely affected by the hegemonic relationships and this also pervades the main terms of social, cultural and academic rubric in a way that these hegemonic practices

have the power to define and assign specific meanings to words or concepts. This, ultimately, shapes reality and influences the other material practices. The fluidity of this relationship between the signifier and the signified creates a discursive space where meanings can be negotiated. This points to ‘partial stability’ which makes certain interpretations appear usual, spontaneous and self-evident (Weisser, 2017, p. 1083). One of its examples is the 1987 Brundtland’s definition in which the meaning of the term ‘sustainability’ is stable which is referenced even after 25 years. The reason is that it was stated by powerful global leaders and designed for broader applications, and achieved a node point which serves as a focal point of contextual, discrete, and localized interpretations of sustainability (Weisser, 2017). However, the previous reviews on sustainability “have focused mainly on environmental sustainability” (Olawumi & Chan, 2018, p. 3), a gap that the current study tends to bridge.

Deleye’s (2024) article provides a valuable empirical contribution to understanding how the concept of a *sustainable university* is being constructed in academic discourse. While the analysis is thorough and well-grounded in existing literature, a deeper critique of the identified discourses and a broader, more inclusive perspective on global sustainability challenges in universities would enhance the impact of the study. Nevertheless, the research presents a solid foundation for further debate and action on what a sustainable university could and should look like.

The discursive formulations of *campus sustainability* are too many in higher education that it is impossible to recount all of them here. So, the following points highlight some important limitations and areas for improvement after the brief inferences and summarized readings.

There is a lack of critical engagement with the dominant discourses. While the previous and current research provides a useful categorization of discourses, there is a limited critique of the

implications of each discourse. For example, the *green-tech campus* focuses on technological solutions and campus infrastructure. Still, most studies do not interrogate whether this could lead to a commodification of sustainability or the privileges got by wealthy institutions over others. Similarly, the *engaged community* discourse could be further critiqued regarding how power dynamics within and beyond the university shape these engagements.

The potential oversight of institutional challenges is also a grey area. Although contemporary research highlights the domains for integrating sustainability, it does not sufficiently explore the potential institutional, financial or bureaucratic challenges the universities may face in implementing these ideals. Without addressing these challenges, the framework could be seen as overly optimistic and difficult to operationalize, especially in underfunded or resource-constrained universities.

The dominance of west-centric perspectives is a great barrier in composing clear goals for the local ecology. The majority of the studies and frameworks cited (e.g., Henderson et al., Leal Filho, Lozano et al.) are from Western academic contexts, which may limit the applicability of the findings to universities in different socio-economic, political and cultural settings. There is little discussion on how non-western institutions or universities in the Global South engage with sustainability, which could have enriched the analysis by providing a more global perspective.

There is a limited focus on student engagement in this discourse. *Campus experience* as one of the domains is being discussed in this discourse, but the studies do not delve deeply into how students themselves engage with sustainability. Given that students are often key agents of change in driving sustainability movements on campus, more attention to their role, motivations and

challenges in participating in sustainability initiatives would have added another valuable dimension to the current analyses being done.

A wide range of concerns are needed to be explored in further studies like university's stance of sustainability as the focal point in terms of certain variables such as race, class, gender and culture, the areas of economics and ethics sharing common and uncommon grounds in local, regional and national settings, the influence of visual rhetoric, the effect of pedagogy in raising awareness, etc. It is the demand of the present times to study and analyze the ways in which Pakistani institutions draw upon existing definitions of sustainability, create new definitions of sustainability based on regional and national contexts and thus redesign the material realities of the concept of sustainable development in the contemporary university system (Weisser, 2017). The analysis of discursive representation in the SDGs negotiations show the discourse at the forum of United Nations is not representative of the whole world. As Carant (2017) calls it, "a World Social Forum discourse," which is "largely unheard in the articulation of the SDGs because the UN has failed to produce the transformational systemic shifts necessary for long-term, sustainable and equitable change for all" (p. 34).

Therefore, reformation of discursive representation is the need of the hour pointing out how and where it has to be implemented to bring equity in discourse. Identification of conditions in which a free and justified space is provided to express the viewpoints of all. "So as to provide a legitimacy check on to which degree global policymaking features a comprehensive and accurate range of discourses on sustainability" (Sénit, 2020, pp. 426-427).

Today's world is the world of time management and results, and sustainability is a phenomenon that is both fluid and fixed at the same time in many contexts. So, it is hard for the researchers to

keep standard criteria for evaluating campus sustainability discourse for all types of institutions. The factors such as context, ecology, administrative structures, needs, goals, etc. play a contributing role in such decisions to assess and monitor the discourse types and the variants around them. It is also endorsed that there is variation of answers according to the HEIs' policies and society's responses. However, the difficulty of defining what is to be sustainable development for them is not seen as a problem for all sectors of HEIS currently.

BROADER IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The article opens up several avenues for future research. It lays the groundwork for investigating how different institutions interpret and operationalize sustainability, and whether certain discourses are more dominant in specific regions, cultures or types of institutions (e.g., research vs. teaching-focused universities). Moreover, further research could explore how institutional barriers and enablers impact the successful integration of sustainability across the six domains presented in the framework. Lastly, examining how students, faculty and administrators negotiate these discourses could provide a more holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities in building a sustainable university.

In terms of practice, universities could use the framework as a self-assessment tool to evaluate their current engagement with sustainability and identify areas for improvement. Policymakers and funding bodies may also look to these findings to guide the development of policies and grants that support more sustainable practices in higher education.

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Ecolinguistics and Media: Analyzing the Semiotic Framing of Environmental Issues in Pakistani Newspapers

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Abstract:

The study examined how through certain semiotic choices, Pakistani English newspaper 'The Dawn' presented environmental issues to their readership, in a particular manner. Employing a purposive sampling technique, ten pictorials addressing environmental issues were downloaded from internet archives published from 2019 to 2023 in the said newspaper. Kress and van Leeuwen's theory of visual grammar (2006) and Arran Stibbe's theory on ecolinguistics (2015) were leveraged as theoretical frameworks. The researchers aimed to uncover the semiotic repertoire employed to depict environmental challenges. A qualitative analysis was carried out of each pictorial, the major areas addressed were the national and international economic woes and environmental troubles stemming from global warming and climate change. Moreover, these issues, the deleterious effects they entail and the urgent measures required were highlighted using various metaphors, framing and salience. The stakeholders are recommended to initiate and foster

environmentally friendly practices through recognition, strengthening environmental regulations, and using media to raise awareness and inspire collective action. To ensure a safe future for us and our progeny raising awareness and being proactive to the environmental issues is indispensable.

Keywords: Semiotic representation, Pakistani English newspaper, Environmental issues, Qualitative study, Ecolinguistics perspective.

1. Introduction

This research paper examines the semiotic framing of environmental issues in Pakistani Newspapers. Unchecked exploitation and usage of natural resources for rapid economic expansion has given birth to and exacerbated myriads of ecological challenges, including species endangerment, resource depletion, and environmental degradation. From an ecological viewpoint, the conflict between humans and the natural world is becoming more intense, putting human existence as well as the ecology of the natural world in jeopardy. With the manifestation of disastrous ecological calamities such as inter alia, heat waves, droughts and urban flooding, environmental issues have taken precedence over other issues.

An ecosystem with harmonious relationships between humans and the environment is the solution to the growing ecological issues. Consequently, experts in ecological linguistics have turned their attention to ecological studies in order to further address ecological concerns; ecological discourse analysis has recently gained popularity as an area of research in this regard. As a result, the area of ecolinguistics is rather new, having emerged just recently. In order to show how discourse affects the relationship between humans and the ecosystem and to expose the ecological values concealed within speech, ecological discourse analysis emphasizes the role that language plays in the ecosystem and in ecological issues. (Miao & Lei, 2019). In their analysis of China Daily's news coverage from 2010 to 2019, Fu and Wang (2022) found that while the newspaper emphasized the importance of China and the US working together on climate change, it also presented China as a responsible great power and the US as irrational and self-centered. They linked the portrayals of those two countries to growing nationalism and pragmatism, as well as the China dream.

In a similar fashion, a polyphonic analysis of implicate reasoning on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Summary for Policymakers (AR5) was conducted by Kanerva and Krizsán (2021). It was discovered that pro-growth, ostensibly pro-activity framing was employed in IPCC discourses to dissuade action on climate change. They suggested that the IPCC forego using terminology of that nature and instead make use of their constructive influence to develop policies that are effective and advance the transition to a society that is carbon free. Krzyżanowski (2013) used the discourse-historical approach (DHA) to analyze the European Union's (EU) 2007–2011 climate policy. The investigation revealed the European Commission's responses to social, political, and economic shifts that occurred both inside the EU and outside of it. He pointed out that while the audience might not notice some discursive shifts and modifications throughout time, the topic of policy-communication has largely stayed constant. Research employing the CDS approach has focused on how these discursive tactics produce distinct and frequently divergent interpretations of specific aspects of climate change. These examine the roles that language structures and visual aids play in the formulation and dissemination of climate-related issues (Nerlich et al., 2010)

The rapid advancement of technology, the invention and pervasiveness of computers, multimedia, and other Internet technologies, have all contributed to a shift in human social communication activities toward multimodality. In keeping with these developments, human social communication activities have also become multimodal. Additionally, images, colors, sounds, and other nonverbal clues may be included in news stories, posters, and advertisements. As a result, linguists are beginning to concentrate more on the relationship between language and ecological and environmental challenges. Archaeological excavations reveal primitive paintings created on cave walls by Neanderthal painters every other day. They have expressed themselves artistically

in these artworks. However, after the Sumerians established writing in the fifth century BCE, people were able to explain their subject in great detail. But it did not in the slightest diminish the importance of pictorial representations; rather, they greatly complemented one another. The saying goes, "A picture is worth a thousand words," and this is true in this case as well. A picture shows the outward physical facts and offers insight into the implicit forces that create those realities, effectively conveying the complete scenario. Print media now uses cartoons as a discursive tool to convey thoughts and opinions about the subject matter, realizing the value of this form of expression.

Environmental issues such as pollution, deforestation, climate change, and biodiversity loss have drawn a lot of attention recently because of the significant effects they will have on current and future generations. Solving these difficulties requires an understanding of how these environmental issues are portrayed and communicated through different media. Newspapers are a powerful and well-established medium of communication. Owing to its large readership and global reach, the English newspaper is an invaluable information resource for anyone who seek to know more about environmental issues.

Therefore, comprehending how these subjects are semiotically represented in English newspapers is essential to comprehending the socio-cultural processes underlying environmental discourse. English-language newspapers are widely read informative resources that greatly influence public opinion and legislative choices. Analyzing the semiotic representation of environmental issues in English newspapers might help one understand the socio-cultural dynamics behind environmental discourse. Newspapers use a range of semiotic techniques, including as language, images, diagrams, and layout, to convey meaning and convey information. Analyzing these multimodal

resources can help us understand how environmental concerns are framed, the discourses that surround them, and the ideologies that drive how they are portrayed. The language research focuses on the vocabulary, allegories, and rhetorical devices that are employed to discuss and portray environmental challenges. Visual analysis examines the ways in which graphics, images, and visual signals are used to communicate ideas and influence people's opinions about environmental issues.

Leveraging Kress and Leeuwen along with Stibbe model as a theoretical foundation, this study aims to investigate the semiotic devices used in the cartoons published in Pakistani English newspaper for portrayal of environmental issues. Taking into consideration the crucial nature of environmental issues faced by the world in general and Pakistan specifically, the way in which these concerns are communicated to the people through various mediums, carries immense significance. It is the awareness regarding these challenges which would lead to action in order to mitigate or address them. With the unprecedented rise in global warming and climate change related events, the populace of the developing nations such as Pakistan are the most affected, particularly in terms of their economic survival. Hence, in this backdrop, the semiotic representations of these environmental issues in the Pakistani English newspaper warrant linguistic attention. Shedding light on the manner and the semiotic choices opted for depicting environmental issues to the readers in the newspaper is what motivates the current study.

1.2 Research Objectives

- 1) To examine the representation of environmental issues in multimodal data present in Pakistani English newspaper

- 2) To uncover the semiotic repertoire employed by the cartoonist for portrayal of the environmental issues in a certain manner.

1.3 Research Questions

- 1) How are environmental issues represented in the Pakistani English newspaper by making use of cartoons?
- 2) What semiotic repertoire has been employed to depict the environmental issues in a certain way?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Although ecolinguistics is becoming more prominent as a field of study, comprehending the complex relationships still necessitates a detailed qualitative investigation of semiotic data, particularly in the Pakistani context. The study thus aims to fill this niche and add to the body of knowledge on the subject. Consequently, it aims to contribute to the field of ecolinguistics by providing a qualitative understanding of the complex relationships that exist between environment, and language as portrayed in the Pakistani English newspaper. The findings of this research can be used to inform environmental communication strategies, policy recommendations, and instructional initiatives that promote sustainable practices and a more inclusive and informed conversation about ecological issues.

Keeping in view the research parameters, the researchers have delimited their research by only selecting ten cartoons from newspaper ‘The Dawn’, published in the period of 2019 to 2023 period as a data sample. In addition, from the various elements posited by Arran Stubbe (Stubbe A., 2015)

in his work; the researchers have only made use of and adapted the framing, metaphor and salience aspects of the framework for the study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Semiotics and Visual Communication

The study of semiotic data has come a long way, with its roots going back to Ferdinand de Saussure's publications on the essential elements of a sign—*signified and signifier*. Recent years have seen a relative increase in linguistic attention to the semiotic discourse employed in the media, and multimodal discourse analysis has been deemed by numerous scholars to be the most successful approach in this regard. Eco-linguistics is a relatively new field of Applied Linguistics that emerged in the 1990s. It is a thorough approach to the study of language from a wide range of theoretical perspectives, including political science, economics, sociology, and psychology. Eco-linguistics is the paradigm that investigates the relationships between language and its context of use. The social, mental, and natural habitats of language are the three categories of environments and levels of language study that are encompassed by the phrase environment of language.

2.2 Language and Environment

The term physical environment refers to any location's overall geographic configuration. It includes all of the natural components that provide every community with living circumstances suitable for that specific geographic location. Things in a person's physical environment have a big impact on their conduct. Geographical parameters are also very significant in language-related research. The social aspects are more important since language is by its very nature a social phenomenon. Sociolinguistics and the sociology of language scholars refer to the social context or

forces as demographic or social factors. Contributing factors usually include the speaker's gender, age, social standing, employment, network, location of origin, and domicile. Language's psychological component is another important aspect. According to this dimension, language is primarily defined by the people who learn, use, and pass it down from one generation of people to the next (Stibbe, 2015). In the past, studies of language have given more weight to ideological and sociological perspectives than to the biological aspect of language. In the 20th century, structuralists, especially generativists, only considered the mental components of language. The social and mental components were then integrated by sociolinguists. The Eco-linguistic paradigm made it feasible to study language holistically, accounting for social and economic viewpoints as well as the impact of biological diversity on linguistic decisions.

2.3 Ecolinguistics and Environmental Narratives

Since its inception in the 1990s, ecolinguistics has sought to establish a link between the language used in a community and the natural and cultural ecology that provides it with sustenance. As the name suggests, it is about language and environment. The study of eco-linguistics examines the ways in which language influences nature, contributes to its preservation, and both builds and destroys ecosystems. It examines typical language patterns that influence people's perceptions of and interactions with their environment. It can examine the stories we tell ourselves, the ideas in our heads that direct our behavior and form the basis of the ecological issues we confront.

Arran Stibbe in his work, has distinguished between three distinct discourse patterns: constructive, ambivalent, and destructive. A beneficial discourse conveys the ideology of a helpful story, which is defined as "a story seen as encouraging people to protect the ecosystems that life depends on" (Stibbe 2015). Hence, it advances ideals such as social justice, resilience, environmental

preservation, and the welfare of other animal and plant species. Ambivalent discourse can be defined as "a story seen as having mixed benefits and drawbacks in encouraging people to protect the ecosystems that life depends on" (Stibbe 2015). When a discourse aims to address ecological issues positively but is embedded in, and dependent upon the same political or financial underpinnings as these issues, it is said to be ambivalent. Put another way, while it may appear to be a green conversation, it actually maintains the status quo. A destructive discourse perpetuates the notion that "people are encouraged to destroy the ecosystems on which life depends." Stibbe (2015). Stated differently, a discourse is destructive if it ignores the fact that human error is the root cause of the current environmental problem and instead advocates for ecological plunder, social inequality, and devastation. Additionally, it spreads beliefs that we ought to be able to disagree with.

The ecolinguist must use an analytical framework in order to assess questionable environmental literature. Ecosophy is used as a criterion to determine if a piece of literature supports environmental harm or protection. Using this paradigm, the ecolinguist deciphers the underlying meanings of such literature. Linguistics provides a range of approaches for the examination of environmental texts, including as framing theory, cognitive theory, systemic functional grammar, and critical discourse analysis. The ecolinguist delves into the meaning of these texts, trying to ascertain whether their purpose is to encourage environmental protection or if their purpose is to deliberately encourage environmental destruction.

Linguistic ecology, also referred to as ecolinguistics, is a relatively young discipline that is included in the applied linguistics domain. Haugen is credited as founding this field of applied linguistics (1972). In his book *The Ecology of Language*, he defines language ecology as "the

study of interactions between any given language and its environment." The term ecology was used as a metaphor for discussing and investigating linguistic variations in connection to the natural world, social phenomena, biodiversity, and an ecosystem as a whole—on which life depends. Ecolinguistics, a global approach to linguistics that examines and communicates environmental, socioeconomic, and bio-diversification issues, places a strong emphasis on climate change. Glasser (1995) asserts that ecosophy is not confined to a single ecological perspective and that there are several that contribute to the environment. Different subsystems make up a whole ecological system. Ecolinguists thus select a certain framework according to their personal worldview. Ecosophy rests on existing norms, preconceived conceptions, and social customs. Texts pertaining to the environment that are found in journals, newspapers, scientific reports, advertisements, and other written works also employ language.

2.4 Media Representation of Environmental Issues

Pounds (2021) investigated woodland narratives collected in 2016 by the UK nonprofit environmental organization Woodland Trust, applying the Appraisal approach. By distinguishing between the values attributed to trees and woodland in the narratives, she brought to light the intricate link between the admiration of nature and the value system which undergird it. Furthermore, she underlined how important it is to recognize and support people's emotional links to the environment in order to prevent climate change and protect the ecosystem. In a (2009) study, Olausson examined three national Swedish newspapers and discovered that none of them was willing to report on scientific ambiguity that would cast doubt on coordinated climate action. But a study of image-language relationships in Canadian media found that the public's knowledge of climate change was inconsistent. This resulted from the tendency of language and visual

communication to pull discourse directions in various directions, making statements that are at times inconsistent, unclear, and unrelated (DiFrancesco & Young, 2011).

Carvalho (2018) investigated the discursive strategies used to reframe the greenhouse effect and climate change in political speeches and the British media. Synchronic and diachronic research axes have been produced as a result of the application of traditional critical discourse analysis as a methodology. The study also investigated power discourse and examined how the greenhouse effect was portrayed as a public issue in a number of contexts. As an alternative, a detailed examination of three British "quality" newspapers—The Guardian, The Independent, and The Times—was carried out to ascertain the extent to which discursive strategies have been employed to portray the issues. In a different study, Sedlaczek (2015) examined how documentaries are used to portray climate change in the media. Multimodal critical discourse analysis employs semiotics and multimodality in conjunction with CDA as a theoretical framework. The study addressed two approaches to bring together and utilize insights from ecolinguistics and ecosemiotics into a collective framework. Whereas the second half offered an epistemological perspective, the first section looked at the discursive strategies the media employed to depict climate change. The fight against greenhouse gases and, to a large extent, global warming is essential for maintaining the health of our planet and its ecosystems. Raising awareness of climate change and spreading it to others is vital.

3. Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The images are full of indicators that allude to numerous underlying ideologies and transmit layers of meaning, the researchers have endeavoured to examine such multimodal text by correlating

these signifiers and their ecological importance. In order to do this, Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) theory of visual grammar was employed to study these semiotic resources, which include colour, posture, language, and shapes among others. Next, using Stibbe's (2015) framework of salience, metaphor, and framing, the ecological ramifications presented in the images are brought out.

The process of arranging how one aspect of the story, a frame, is framed in another aspect of life is called **framing**. Individuals vary not only in the different frames but also in their behaviors and social interactions. Stated differently, disparate frames communicate drastically diverse stories about the world as it is or should be in the future. A **metaphor**, in short, is a story that portrays a subject as something else. Metaphors are a type of framing where the source frame, which originates from a specific, concrete, and imaginable sector of existence, is clearly different from the target domain. **Salience** is a narrative style that tells a story about something important or attention-grabbing in texts by utilizing salience patterns. These patterns in language that reflect and highlight particular facets of life. Increasing the prominence of the non-human environment in language writing is the aim of ecolinguistics.

3.2 Research Methodology

The present study adopted a qualitative method research paradigm. To begin with, research questions pertaining to the multimodal analysis of semiotic data in the Pakistani English newspaper about environmental issues were formulated. The second step involved the collection of data for which semiotic data pertaining to the subject was extracted from the publication of the newspaper "The Dawn". The researcher opted for a purpose sampling technique, through the use of Google search engine relevant semiotic data (ten images/cartoons) published in time period of 2019 to 2023 was downloaded from the internet archives. Following this the two theoretical frameworks

of Kress Leeuwen and Stibbe were drawn on to unravel the underlying ideologies and embedded meanings in terms of ecolinguistics perspective. The semiotic choices employed for that purpose and the message were the subject of investigation. Then in view of the analysis, research findings were drawn and a comprehensive conclusion was obtained. Finally, the limitations of the current study were discussed along with any possible recommendations for future research.

4. Data Analysis

Semiotics plays an elemental role when it comes to providing a lucid and comprehensive overview of the various socio-political issues around the globe. In a brief amount of space and time, significant quantity of information germane to the topic is communicated through them. The key thematic formations that can be abstracted from the selected cartoons are: deteriorating air quality, global warming and climate change, renewable energy. The settings employed in these cartoons are laden with rich details and the contextual scenario of the particular issues being depicted. The semiotic landscapes presented through such cartoons help mold the perception of the subject in a particular social milieu. Through them the audience can viscerally experience what is taking place on ground zero, without having to imperil their safety. Instilling the importance and appreciation for nature from a young age is necessary and in this regard visuals come in handy. Teenagers nowadays are more interested in getting an idea about a subject through audio-visual mode rather than opting for reading articles or books. Keeping this need in mind, the visuals chosen for depicting an issue on which our future hinges, are of extreme significance to say the least. The examination of semiotic sources employed by the Pakistani English newspaper “The Dawn” in ten cartoons related to environmental issues is as under.



Figure 1 from newspaper 'The Dawn', published: 8th June, 2019

The primary characters in the image are the boy, the father, and the turtle. When the boy's fishing rod unintentionally hooks the turtle, it acts as a bridge connecting the human and non-human worlds. This graphic link emphasizes how human activity affects animals. The turtle covered in plastic, which is placed at the end of the fishing line to attract attention, is the most striking visual element. The serene background, which consists of tranquil waterways, trees, and the setting sun, contrasts with the disturbing image of the struggling turtle. This emphasizes the contradiction between the harm caused by human activities and the idyllic beauty of nature. The fishing line, which symbolizes the direct but usually unintended consequences of human action on the

ecosystem, graphically connects the child to the turtle. The depiction of the father and son on the boat, detached from the turtle and its plight, reflects a broader cultural attitude of disassociation from ecological degradation. The father's relaxed manner and disdainful words, which project a normalized rather than worried attitude, serve to widen this gap. The father's wry remark, "It's natural, son," challenges the audience to think critically about the normalcy of environmental degradation. The turtle's predicament is portrayed as an inevitable aspect of "nature," absolving human behavior of responsibility. This irony prompts viewers to think about how language and attitudes may conceal human accountability for ecological harm.

The cartoon uses a picture of a turtle entangled in plastic to highlight the issue of plastic pollution. The father's comment and the boy's innocent question demonstrate how society tends to downplay or misrepresent environmental issues. The father's comment uses a metaphor to reframe human-caused problems as natural by depicting the natural environment as "scary" and chaotic. This metaphor absolves humans of responsibility by suggesting that wildlife suffering is a natural occurrence rather than the result of human activity. The father's anthropocentric framing reflects a worldview in which human needs and opinions take precedence above ecological concerns. By dismissing the turtle's condition as "natural," the parent clears his name and contributes to a narrative that normalizes ecological devastation. However, the animation itself encourages viewers to comprehend how human conduct impacts the planet by adopting an eco-systemic viewpoint. The observer is compelled to consider how human activities impact the environment due to the turtle's conspicuous position and the shocking sight of plastic litter.



Figure 2 from newspaper 'The Dawn', published: 31st August, 2019

The Earth is the primary participant, anthropomorphized to arouse feeling and sensibility. As part of the Earth's "head," the smoldering Amazon is depicted, highlighting how essential it is to the planet's well-being. Smoke and flames emanating from the Amazon dominate the upper part of the image, conveying a sense of urgency and destruction. This image highlights the environmental issue and makes a direct connection between the world's suffering and the devastation of the Amazon. The fire atop the globe is the most striking element, drawing the viewer's attention right away. Its size and placement at the top of the cartoon highlight how serious and significant the issue is. The viewer is emotionally engaged and the sense of urgency is increased by the "HELP!" sign and the distressed expression on Earth's face. Being the sole character in the animation, the Earth is positioned to emphasize its isolation and suffering, signifying the absence of sufficient

global action to halt environmental deterioration. This dearth of other players, such as individuals or industries, indirectly critiques humanity's lack of accountability and crisis management. While also promoting reflection on the broader issues of deforestation and climate change, the explicit labeling of the burning Amazon ensures that viewers are aware of the critique's specific focus.

The smoke and flames are intensified to emphasize the scope of the disaster, to focus the viewer attention to the issue at hand. The anthropomorphized Earth increases the salience by transforming an abstract concept—planetary suffering—into a relatable, human-like feeling of distress and urgency. The flaming Amazon is depicted as the "head" of the earth, implying that the rainforest functions as the brain or vitality of the planet. By controlling the climate, producing oxygen, and maintaining biodiversity, the Amazon plays a crucial role in maintaining the ecological balance of the planet, as this metaphor highlights. By showing the Earth as a person in pain, the cartoon highlights the link between human behavior, environmental degradation, and planetary health. The "HELP!" sign serves as a metaphorical cry for assistance and symbolizes how dependent on humans the planet is to repair the damage it has caused. The cartoon's framing, which emphasizes the planet's point of view, opposes anthropocentrism. The Earth's human-like characteristics and emotional expression challenge the dispassion usually associated with environmental issues, and viewers are pushed to recognize the moral and ethical elements of ecological degradation. The absence of particular human figures or industries in the comic further obscures direct culpability. Instead, the framing universalizes the blame by implying that the issue calls for concerted global action. The cartoon challenges the normality of environmental degradation by highlighting urgency, empathy, and accountability.

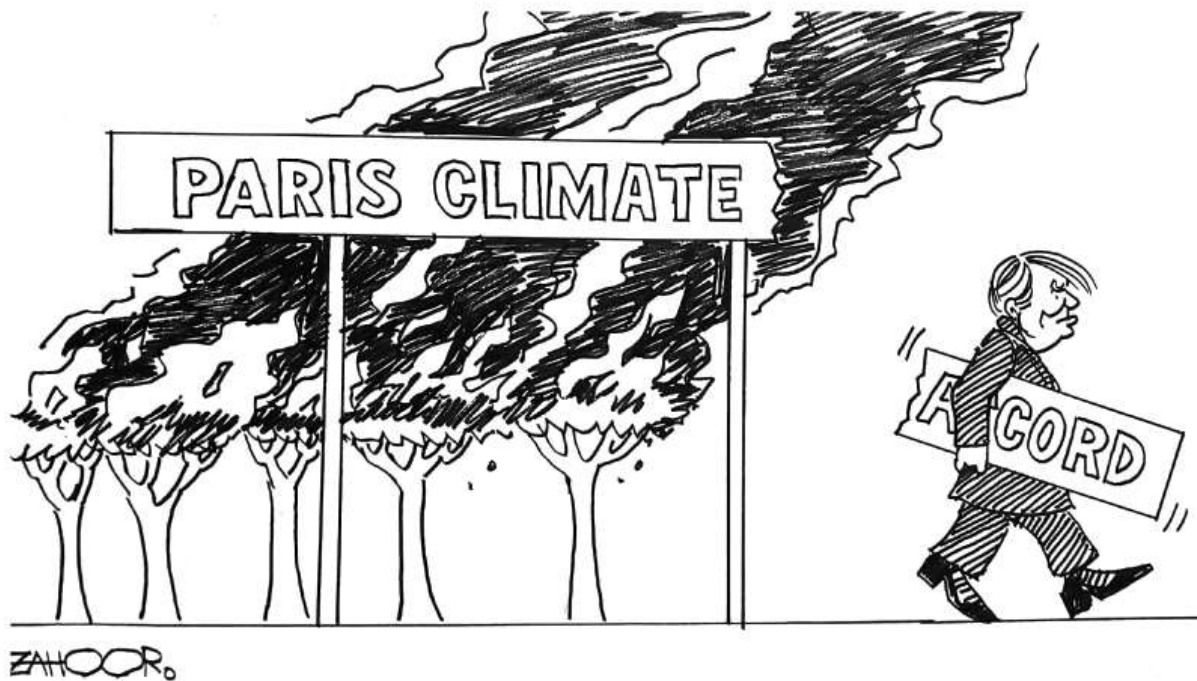


Figure 3 from newspaper 'The Dawn', published: 7th November, 2019

Referencing Trump's 2017 decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, the cartoon highlights the disparity between rhetorical climate pledges and actual inaction. The burning trees represent the destruction of the environment and the increasing consequences of inaction on climate change.

Above the flames, the "Paris Climate" sign highlights the incapacity to accomplish the planned

Framework for addressing climate challenges.

The charge of Trump's lack of involvement is supported by his visual distance from the destruction as he walks to the right. To highlight the unfulfilled promises of climate agreements, the "Paris

Climate" sign is positioned conspicuously. Trump's visual distance from the devastation as he walks to the right supports the criticism of his lack of involvement. Trump's casual demeanor, which contrasts sharply with the urgency of burning trees, seeks viewers to reflect on his decision and the broader implications of withdrawing from the Paris Agreement. The smoke and flames provide a visual depiction of the escalating climate crisis. Trump's image is positioned to draw the eye in and evoke a sense of desertion despite its small size. The burning trees represent the catastrophic effects of climate negligence, while the "Paris Climate" sign signifies global efforts to address these issues. Trump's scrapping of the "Accord" is symbolic of disengagement and the decline of international climate goals. His departure, which suggests a symbolic repudiation of duty, demonstrates the gap between political rhetoric and environmental action. Trump's focus on trashing the "Accord" places political concerns ahead of environmental management, even though the burning trees represent ecological collapse. The absence of any attempt to extinguish the fires highlights systemic failures in tackling the climate crisis. The cartoon criticizes political leaders' disengagement from environmental issues as well as the normalization of inaction.



Figure 4 from newspaper 'The Dawn', published: 16th Nov, 2019

In figure 4, we see a government official who points to a billboard which reads environment policy 2019 in block letters. It refers to the environment policy rolled out by the government at the time. The general public appears unable to see what the official is pointing to, owing to the massive smog clouds which surround them. Moreover, other semiotic features present are the chopped trees which can be seen in the backdrop. A sign post which reads Lahore, situates the whole scenario as unfolding in the metropolis. Among all the textual data, the word smog is highlighted most with relatively bolder font which speaks to its debilitating effects. The darker color associated with the smog clouds is reflective of the ominous nature and the massive ramifications such environmental problems entail. Smog not only impairs ones vision but also results in health deterioration of those with afflictions such as asthma. Extended exposure causes severe and at times irreparable damage

to the lungs. The situation presented is symbolic since most of Pakistan was faced with this issue at the time albeit the city of Lahore was the worst affected. The chopped tree in the background, is also symbolic for the reasons why people are faced with such environmental hazards in the first place. Its placement behind the official is metaphorical in that it hints at the incompetency and indifference with which humans address these grave issues. The inability of the public in seeing the board also has a tinge of satirical undertone in that it portrays the inefficacy of the measures taken by the government in addressing the deteriorating air quality.



Figure 5 from newspaper 'The Dawn', published: 9th June, 2021

In figure 5, we see the statue of liberty in great peril. The semiotic system adopted by the artist brings to reality the unfathomable yet possible scenario of massive rise in the global sea level as a result of the runaway global warming rate. The use of this iconic statue highlights the salience and the urgent need to address and mitigate any such eventuality. The statue being neck deep in water actually is a metaphor for the impending situation for the whole humanity wherever they may be. If and when the natural calamity of global sea level rise takes place no one would be spared. The artist makes brilliant use of the rain drops serving two purposes: one to show the increased rate of precipitation with the increase in global warming and second it appears as if the statue is breaking a sweat due to the dangerous situation it finds itself in. As it was not obvious enough through the use of text, it is clearly stated that the grim scenario painted in the figure owes itself to the rising level of global warming.

Through the use of this semiotic repertoire, the artists paint the doomsday scenario being faced by the human species. It stresses the need to take preemptive measures in cutting down on the anthropogenic activities which not only fuel but also catalyze the rise in rate of global warming. If such drastic measures are not undertaken the future of humanity for which the lamp held by the statue is a metaphor, will be imperiled with risk of the flame being doused out by the ever-increasing sea level.

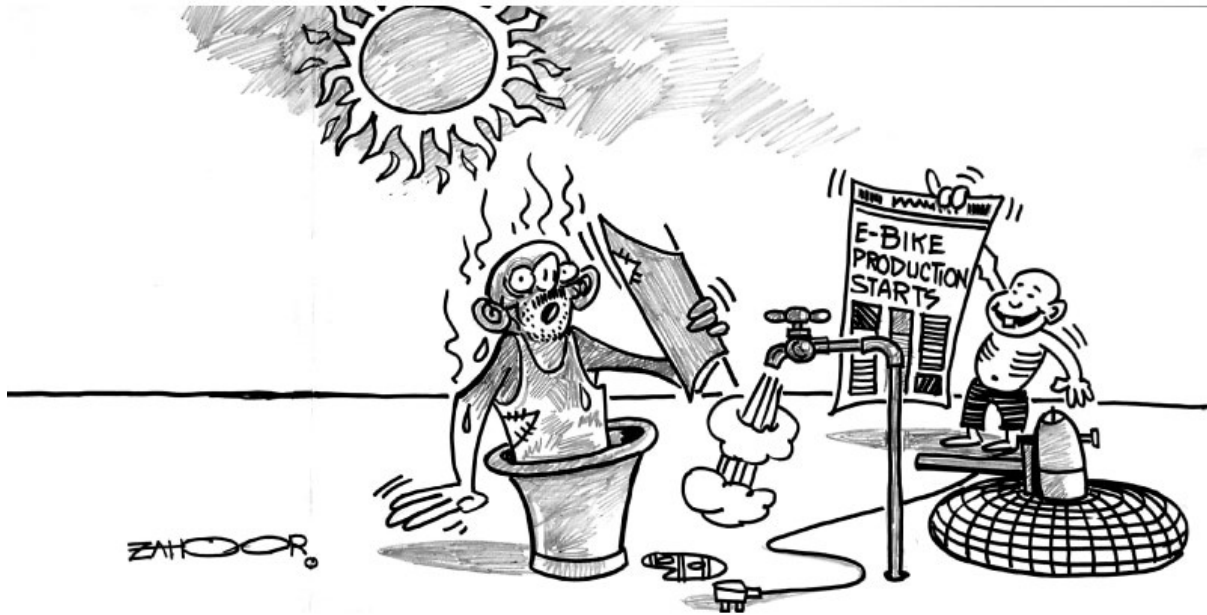


Figure 6 from newspaper 'The Dawn', published: 11th July, 2021

The absurd and to some extent comical situation with the regards to the Pakistani milieu are presented in figure 6. Two participants can be observed in the image, a father and his kin. The adult figure is seen in an extremely bad situation as the scorching heat of July sun bears down on him. In order to obtain some respite, the adult tries everything in his power. With the persistent power outages, he resorts to a hand fan but it cannot keep the heat away. He then turns to taking a bath but the tap has also run dry, leaving him stranded and boiling in a bucket. As all this is unfolding, we see a young child holding out the front page of a newspaper to the adult which states that the production of electric bikes in the country has kicked off.

By making use of semiotic devices a comprehensive and holistic picture of what happens in Pakistani during peak summer months is presented. The futility of the efforts to keep the heat at bay is metaphorically akin to lackluster performance of those who hold the reigns of power in instituting and executing environmental policies which protect the citizens of the country from the adverse environmental impacts, such as heat waves. The news pertaining to the shift to renewable energy sources though appreciable also underlines the unrealistic nature of such measure, of what use would an electric bike be if an individual would not have the requisite electricity to charge it with. Moreover, it frames how despite the lack of provision of basic amenities such as electricity and water, those in power corridors resort to grandiose announcements which are politically expedient.



Figure 7 from newspaper 'The Dawn', published: 13th June, 2022

In figure 7, we can see an individual dressed as a fireman with a broken water hose in his hands as he stares at the rising columns of flames. To contextualize the situation presented the artist writes the words climate change in block letters, attesting that the scenario unfolding in the image stems from the phenomenon of climate change. It would be an understatement that the job of a fireman is among one of the deadliest occupations in the world. The same frame has been employed to portray the massive magnitude of multifarious calamities humanity faces, if the climate change is left unchecked. These range from consistent heat waves to widespread wildfires and prolonged droughts to name but a few. The viewers' attention is directed at these in a nuanced manner. It is a no-brainer that a sole fireman that too without adequate water supply, would be able to tackle such a massive inferno. The story for humans would turn out to be no more different, if they remain complacent in addressing the environmental challenges posed by climate change. In addition, it highlights the salience of joining our hands together in these efforts, if we are to seriously address and mitigate these disasters in the making. Moreover, the need to conserve water particularly in the Pakistani context by building additional reservoirs and implementing strategies such as rain harvesting, drip irrigation is underscored by the broken water hose. Pakistan despite contributing very little to the problem of climate change is among the countries who face significant repercussions. Pakistan has been playing its part in combating climate change but as mentioned afore it is not something which can be addressing in a meaningful without joint efforts.

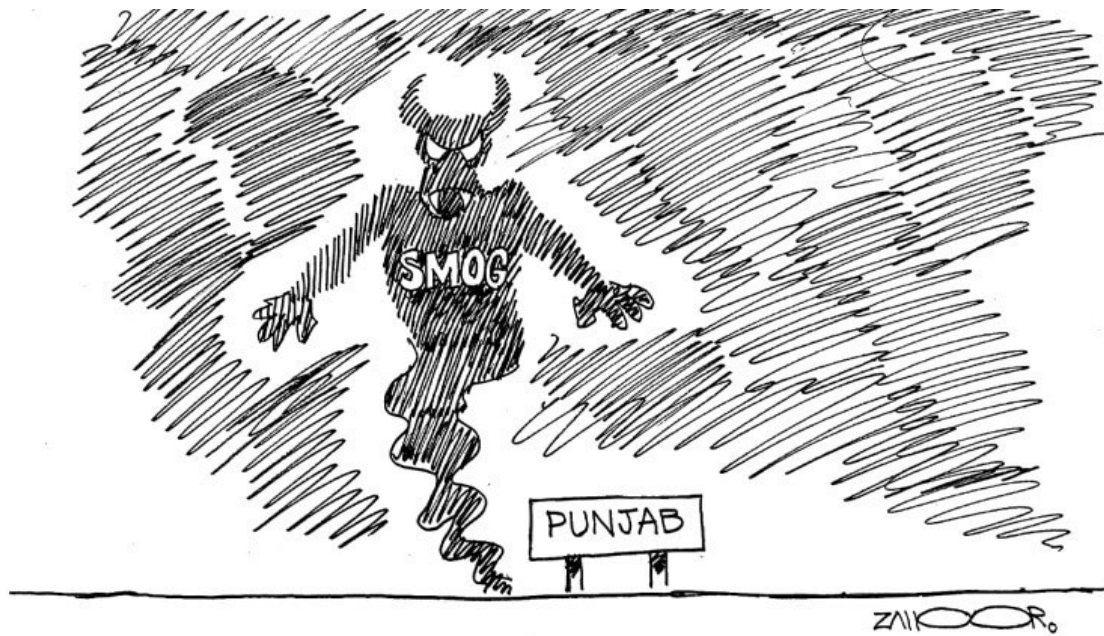


Figure 8 from newspaper 'The Dawn', published: 4th November, 2023

Once again, the perennial problem of smog which effects people in Pakistan in winter months is highlighted in figure 8. In a minimalist manner, the artist has shown the widespread extent of damage caused by the smog all across the country, but especially in the province of Punjab. The pervasiveness of the smog cover in the sky is illustrated with the messy lines covering most of the area. The metaphor of a demon is drawn on to highlight not only the nefarious nature but also the multifarious and extensive repercussions that stem from the onset of smog. The challenges and ill-effects caused by smog are no less haunting than any villainous supernatural entity. The curved horns and pointy Dracula-like fangs are enough to strike fear into the hearts of many. In the same vein, the artist hopes that by showcasing smog in such light he can awaken and impress upon the general community and those in power corridors to take this problem seriously.

The people of Punjab have bore the most brunt of this in the last few years. Not only does smog exacerbate the already precarious situation of those with breathing issues in the winter season; it also prevents sunlight from reaching the surface. Similar to the demon depicted in the figure above, it envelops the whole sky blocking the sunrays. It significantly brings down the visual range while also reducing the temperature further during winter. Thus, it is imperative that serious steps be taken by authorities to prevent activities that deteriorate air quality and give birth to smog.



Figure 9 from newspaper 'The Dawn', published: 19th November, 2023

In figure 9 at the center is a trophy with the name "No. 1," which typically indicates achievement. However, it is ironic that this trophy is awarded for being the most polluted city, which deviates from the usual connotation of such recognition. When the trophy is prominently exhibited with the description, "GLOBAL POLLUTION RANKING AWARD," it instantly attracts attention. Given

its prominent placement and huge wording, viewers will be unable to overlook its significance. The trophy is encircled by a swirling mass of smoke, signifying pollution and emphasizing the negative implications of the prize. This image instantly associates the trophy with environmental degradation, suggesting that the consequences of pollution are pervasive and urgent. The trophy stands for a competitive mindset that usually prioritizes economic growth over environmental sustainability.

The cartoon questions the deeply disturbing notion that, like athletes in a competition, cities vie for a title based on their pollution levels. This metaphor for environmental performance illustrates how society's standards of success can be flawed, rewarding environmentally harmful achievements over those that are beneficial.

By emphasizing Lahore as the recipient of this dubious distinction, the animation asks viewers to consider their role in environmental degradation. By depicting pollution as a prize, the animation questions the competitive mentality that characterizes modern culture and causes viewers to reevaluate what success actually means. In a symbolic sense, the prize highlights the disparity between the objectives of progress and the impact on the environment, calling attention to anomalies in contemporary life. The smoke, which represents negligence and the consequences of urbanization, strengthens the cartoon's message and increases its relatability on a number of levels. It urges viewers to reconsider the tenets that underpin modern civilization, promoting a shift to sustainability and sparking discussion about how our choices impact the environment. The cartoon challenges viewers to think about their personal definitions of success and the need for more ecologically conscious urban development.

NEXT BUDGET MUST ADAPT TO
CLIMATE CHANGE, IMF TELLS PAK

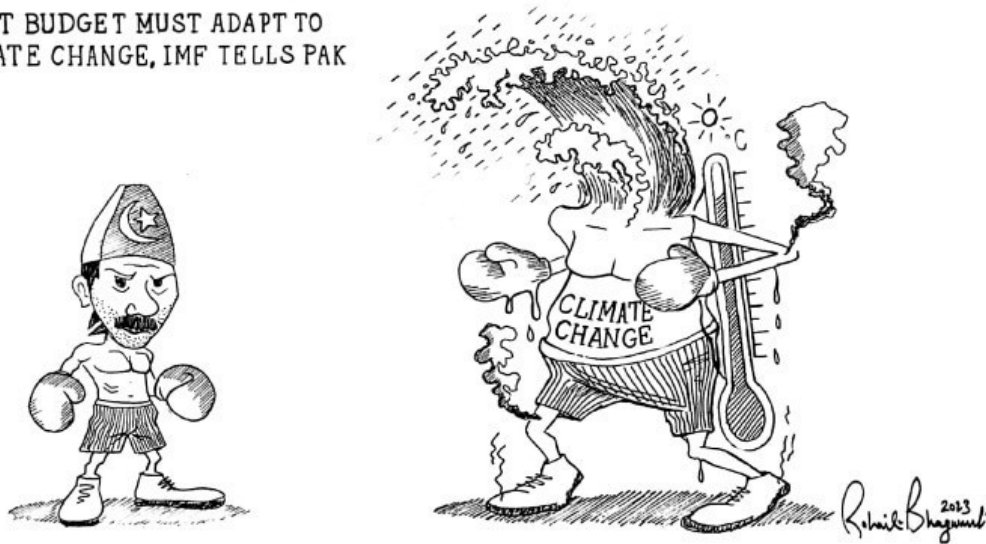


Figure 10 from newspaper 'The Dawn', published: 29th November, 2023

Figure 10 beautifully encapsulates the dilemma faced by Pakistan, whose economic situation is quite dire. It goes without saying that humanity and climate change are locked in an adversarial position, each in a bid to overpower the other. This reality is presented with both entities being shown as boxers facing off against each other. It is pertinent to note that it has been framed to reflect the hard choices many countries particularly in the global south are faced with vis-à-vis environment and economic considerations. They are stuck between a rock and hard place in that on one hand they are required to cut down on any spending in order to revive their economy and stabilize it in the short term. However, if they do not make the necessary investments in infrastructure and other domains to combat climate change, they risk a far worse economic devastation in the long run at the hands of climate change induced calamities. Moreover, if they defer these investments, in the future it might prove to be too little too late.

The caption in the figure highlights the difficult path cash-strapped countries such as Pakistan have to traverse. The bigger size of the object standing in for climate change speaks to the feeble position people of Pakistan find themselves in when faced with such huge challenges for which they do not have the requisite economic wherewithal. In addition, the various body parts of the bigger object are constituted of different environmental disaster which Pakistan is faced with, these include, inter alia, heat waves, rising sea level and smog.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The present study endeavored to investigate how through the use of various semiotic tools the environmental issues have been depicted in the Pakistani English newspaper. In this regard, researcher opted for purposive sampling technique and selected ten cartoons addressing environmental issues, published in the newspaper “The Dawn” in the period of 2019 to 2023. The study utilized Kress and van Leeuwen theory of visual grammar and Arran Stibbe theory on ecolinguistics discourse, as the theoretical underpinning. In light of the research questions, a comprehensive qualitative analysis was undertaken of the individual pictorials/cartoons and the semiotic devices present therein. The major thematic strands running through these images included the deleterious effects brought on by increased rate of global warming and climate change, Pakistan’s economic woes and environmental troubles. In accordance with Kress Leeuwen framework, through the use of various objects, shapes and texture, many implicit messages were relayed to the audience. Moreover, the things which are already known but forgotten or turned a blind eye to, have been brought into the limelight. The overwhelming magnitude of the climate change and its concomitant effects is illustrated with the help of metaphors of a demon engulfing the whole sky, a lone and ill-equipped fireman hopelessly staring at a giant conflagration.

Similarly, the dire position humanity could find itself in, if they do not seriously and proactively take measures in this regard is reflected with the metaphor of a drowning statue of liberty which is up to the neck in water. Furthermore, the lackluster and abysmal performance of individuals in power corridors was underscored. It is shown that they do not attach great importance to the environmental concerns which can prove devastating in the future. In addition, it is shown that they boast of impractical and grandiose schemes without working on the foundational measures required in this regard. The findings also laid bare the whole array of issues ranging from severe heatwaves, to water scarcity and sea level rise, which would be exacerbated if environment damaging anthropogenic activities are not checked.

In light of the findings, it is recommended that considering the immense ramifications attached with environmental issues, civil society and government officials should work shoulder to shoulder in fostering environmentally friendly initiatives. Policymakers should create sustainability awards to recognize localities that lower pollution and enhance environmentally friendly activities, in addition to strengthening regulations to regulate emissions and hold polluters responsible. Green urban design should be encouraged that prioritizes renewable energy and provide incentives for sustainable building practices. Public awareness campaigns should be initiated to educate people about the effects of pollution and motivate individual acts for change. Environmentalists should engage with lawmakers to advocate for more environmental protections, host community workshops to inspire people to embrace sustainable practices, and utilize social media to visually express inspiring stories. Media professionals ought to place pollution issues in the perspective of public health and community well-being by highlighting success stories and using compelling images, such as infographics. Reliable reporting is ensured by educating journalists on environmental challenges, and showcasing individuals and organizations who are making a

difference in the world can inspire collective action. By using these strategies, stakeholders can collaborate to influence perceptions and significantly alter the course toward a more sustainable future.

Hence, in order to ensure a good future for us and our progeny it is indispensable that people be made aware of and should be desisted from activities which harm the environment. For future researches it is suggested that a larger data set be obtained from various places, which was not possible in the present study due to time and space constraints. The other aspects of the Stibbe's framework may be explored so as to obtain a more comprehensive and richer understanding.

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