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WOMEN, SCHOOLING AND WORK IN BOONI VALLEY, PAKISTAN: CHITRALI MUSLIM WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS

by

ALMINA SADRUDIN PARDHAN 

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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Canada
T6J 1A4

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Life is what we make of it, of how we see it, of how we seek to shape it --
life in our homes, the life of our children, the life of our society.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **WOMEN, SCHOOLING AND WORK IN BOONI VALLEY, PAKISTAN: CHITRALI MUSLIM WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS** submitted by Almina Sadrudin Pardhan in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Master of Education in International/Intercultural Education.

Dr. Marilyn Assheton-Smith

Dr. Toh Swee-Hin

Dr. Peggy Wilson

Dr. Eloise Murray

Date: August 30, 1995

Dedicated to:

The women of Booni Valley and Janat Hur Mubarak Shah,
My parents, Sadrudin and Harcharan Pardhan,
My brothers, Azhar and Amaan Pardhan,
My best friend, Karim Sayani

Abstract

The complexity of Third World women's lives is compounded by pressures of economic growth and development and the expectations of their traditional way of life. This is evident in Chitral District, a mountainous region of Northern Pakistan, where the relatively recent process of "schooling" is impacting on the Shia Ismaili and Sunni Muslim women's daily lives. In Chitral District, which is relatively isolated in its geography, politics and economy of Pakistan, the principle source of livelihood and the main industry for the majority of the region's population is agriculture. Local women play an important role in this agricultural production. However, since the 1980's, development initiatives by non-government organizations, like the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), combined with an influx of modern sector activities have resulted in a growing need for women's participation in areas like formal education, rural development and health care.

This study has taken an ethnographic perspective and has assumed that an understanding of women's schooling and work requires a detailed, in-depth account of women's actual experiences in a specific cultural setting, in this case Booni Valley, Chitral District. Twenty-seven women of various schooling, age, work and religious backgrounds have shared their experiences and perspectives of schooling and work in the cultural context of their life.

This study has found similarities and differences in the way women with and without schooling perceive formal education and work. Schooling is seen as the avenue to what is perceived as the prestigious and valued modern world of formal sector work, cash incomes and independence; in the process, women's traditional work, which is vital to the well-being of their families and community, is devalued. The older generation of women wish schooling had been available to them and encourage their daughters to attend school so that they can lead a better and easier life with formal sector work. Paradoxically, these women also view schooling as a way to enhance their daughters' traditional roles. Their workload has increased as they take on the domestic tasks of their daughters who are nearly all in school today.

In the younger generation, many girls are unhappy about the school culture, but the majority of them continue through the process with the same hopes as their mothers: to access the modern world and to enhance their traditional roles. However, many of these girls are unable to reach their goals because of cultural, educational, economic and gender barriers. This leads to frustration and disappointment amongst the girls. They perceive the time spent in school as time which would have been better

spent on other activities because schooling is irrelevant to the household and agricultural labour to which they return. A paradox is also apparent in their views as schooling seems to both contribute to the enhancement of their traditional roles and to a devaluing of their existing contributions to their families and community. The few women who do enter formal sector work are very happy, but find that their workload has increased as they encounter pressures of both formal sector and household and agricultural work.

After observing different aspects of women's lives in Booni Valley, it is evident that the gender structures are deeply rooted and restrict women from participating in many activities in the community or from expressing their opinions on issues concerning their needs and desires. The power of the women's voices leads to a number of recommendations for possible change in education and in the way work is perceived in the valley.

Acknowledgments

The past two and a half years have been very memorable and fulfilling. There have been moments of joy, of contentment, of satisfaction, of laughter and of building many friendships; there have also been times of tears, of frustration, of long and lonely nights with the computer and of sorrowful farewells. But most of all there have been countless moments of learning, moments which I might never have had without the support, love, committment and encouragement of the people who have shared a part in this whole process.

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Beginning the Journey

As a Shia Imami Ismaili Muslim woman who, by virtue of my destiny, has been granted many privileges and fortunes such as access to schooling, the opportunity to follow whatever road in life I choose and, most importantly, a voice to respond to the situations and difficulties that challenge my independence, I feel a sense of compassion toward my Ismaili sisters of Booni Valley in Northern Pakistan who, by virtue of their destiny, have entered the world not knowing nor having the means to know of such fortunes in life. However, in no way does this statement suggest that I view these women as helpless and powerless. On the contrary, these are women who play a significant part in the many dynamic processes which characterize their region's economic and cultural as well as their families' development, but whose contribution has not been put in its proper perspective.

As a Muslim woman I also come to this study with the realization that the image of the Pakistani Muslim women I portray comes face to face with the highly generalized and ethnocentric image, portrayed by academia and the Western media, of a "traditional," "oppressive" and "backward" fundamental Muslim culture which veils and segregates its women. It is an image which presents a "blocked and distorted...analysis of the Muslim woman's situation" (Mernissi, 1975: vii) where the "cultural argument" (Okeyo, 1984: 8) is used to explain the inequality of opportunities between the genders as based solely on cultural factors. Invariably, this viewpoint treats culture as monolithic and static, and usually chooses one index, such as the Islamic religion, as the overriding determinant of women's low status (Okeyo 1984: 8). In presenting this image, most Western feminists have failed to recognize the religious, cultural and historical differences between Muslim women and themselves as well as amongst Muslim women. As a result, Western feminists have created predominantly Eurocentric theories of women's oppression. In reality, however, Muslim women are facing a more complex struggle against many forms of oppression including Western imperialism and, particularly in Southern nations, access to the basic needs for survival.

In presenting the realities of Muslim women in Booni Valley, I have approached this study with the view that their culture and religion cannot be disconnected from the social, economic, political and harsh geographical circumstances in which they live. Moreover, I do not presume that their culture is static. Rather, it is a dynamic culture where numerous economic and social changes in the past two decades, such as girls' and women's access to schooling as well as their access to paid employment, have

resulted in many cultural shifts and have greatly affected women's conditions. I believe that Muslim women in Booni Valley must begin to speak for themselves about the activities and concerns of their own lives. In the process, the significance of their contributions will be revealed, and the women will develop inner resources that will enable them to find additional sources of strength to deal with life's challenges (Maison-Bishop, 1994: 2). As a Muslim woman my most meaningful experience in being with these women for the months of my study has been the women's constant invocations of God and Prophet Muhammed (Peace Be Upon Him)[1] which are critical to their self-definition in the community and which reflect lives that are "imbued with faith in God, rich in practices that reinforce their sense of God's constant presence, and colored by a confident sense of belonging to a community of Muslims" (Abu-Lughod, 1994: 42).

Purpose of the Research and Choosing the Research Question

The main purpose of my study has been to understand the meaning of schooling and work in the lives of women in Booni Valley in Chitral District of Northern Pakistan. For generations, local women have played an important role in agricultural production, the principle source of livelihood and the main industry for the majority of the region's population. In addition, they have also had domestic and child-rearing responsibilities.

In recent decades, however, this primarily agrarian society has witnessed much development with the improvement of communication and the establishment of various institutions like health care, rural development and education. These developments have greatly impacted the local people and the cultural meaning systems which have been a part of their primarily agrarian society for many generations. However, local women are not receiving the same social and economic benefits as the men, nor are they participating in investment decisions. The spread of mechanization and economic growth has decreased the workload of men and increased their opportunities in waged labour, but has not contributed to reducing women's workload (Merchant, 1992). As a result, women's work often goes unrecognized.

Only during the past decade have girls begun to participate more actively in schooling up to class 10 and in some areas of the paid employment sector. Previously these activities were only considered appropriate and acceptable for boys and men

[1]Further references to Prophet Muhammed in this text will be followed by (P.B.U.H).

because of various cultural, social and economic factors. A major factor in women's entry to schooling, in particular amongst the Ismaili women who make up more than two thirds of the Muslim population in Booni, has been the influence of their spiritual leader, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, and his late grandfather, Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III. Their guidance to families to educate their daughters and initiatives by the non-government organization Aga Khan Education Service to establish girls schools in many Ismaili-populated villages in the District have had a great impact on girls' schooling. Development initiatives by the Aga Khan Development Network and the Chitral Area Development Project, combined with the influx of modern sector activities, have opened up paid employment for women in areas like rural development, education and medicine.

However, while "mass schooling" for girls indicates an increase in access to schooling in the valley, it does not suggest how this is affecting the women, particularly in relation to their family roles, gender relationships, their work and other long-held cultural values. This study is, therefore, undertaken against a background of the women's experiences to highlight how schooling is perceived by the women and the meaning which schooling holds for them in relation to the various aspects of their lives. It explores how women view their traditional work and paid labour in light of their exposure to schooling. The research question thus addresses "the perceptions of schooling and work of women in Booni Valley of Chitral District, Northern Pakistan." Women's entry into these milieux, however, has been and continues to be mediated by social, cultural, and economic factors.

My decision to choose this area of research and to listen to as well as share the personal experiences of the women in Booni Valley stems from an experience related to my religion, Ismailism, and to the ethics of Islam. I have been greatly inspired by a key aspect of Islam emphasized and practiced by His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, spiritual leader of Ismaili Muslims, to serve humanity by extending a hand to those who have only known a life of extreme poverty so that they can be in a situation to better help themselves. Not only has the Aga Khan stressed the importance of developing women's formal education as the pillar to personal, familial and communal development, but he has also put much effort into establishing schools for girls in areas like Northern Pakistan where women's schooling has received very little attention in government plans and initiatives. In undertaking this study and by listening to and sharing the personal experiences of women in Booni Valley, I can only hope that this contribution, minute as it is in relation to the efforts put forth by the Aga Khan, will in

some way aid in the development of women's schooling and in the overall development of women.

Significance of the Study

The increased consciousness brought about by the United Nations Decade for Women has resulted in many Southern women gaining strength to speak out on the issues which are important to their lives. Research on the lives of Southern women has greatly increased. However, in Chitral District research pertaining to women in development, in particular as it relates to formal education, is limited. Impediments to research include the infancy of women's schooling in many parts of the district and the geography and the climate of the district which are not conducive to conduct such research. Nonetheless, for any development to take place in the District, as in any other part of the world, it is vital that the complexities of the women's lives be understood. This can only be done by listening to the women and allowing them to voice their experiences.

The need for Southern women's voices to be heard is compounded by feminist discourse which depicts their experiences as homogeneous and universal and which does not take into account the deeply embedded conflicts between the different groups of women all over the world (Mohanty, 1991, Trinh T., 1989). Although commonalties exist in the experiences of Southern nations' women due to the development process in the Third World, Southern nations' women also experience different realities specific to their own regions. Therefore, to lump all the experiences of the women in Booni Valley together with the experiences of Southern women around the world implying that they are homogenous would only perpetuate the cycle of simplistic and meaningless recommendations for empowering Southern women. Recognizing this critical need to allow Southern women to express their different needs and concerns as well as their commonalties so that recommendations can respond to their experiences, I have come to this research with the view that listening to women's voices and learning from their experiences is crucial to the reconstruction of our understanding of education and development in their regions.

I believe that the most significant part of this study is the voice which it has given the women of Booni Valley. Most of these women live in a "culture of silence" where cultural norms have emphasized male authority in every echelon of life including women's lives at home, school, and the workplace. One of the most painful experiences I encountered in Booni was the men who questioned the value of the

women's words to the work I was doing and, in some instances, who wondered why I did not just get my answers from the men. What was even more saddening was that the women themselves, particularly those with no schooling, often believed that they had nothing of value to share or offer when I asked them about their lives. Ironically, the women's stories are full of purpose, richness and aspiration. Some of their stories are painful, others are exhilarating and some are a mixture of both; but all are inspiring as they open up a wealth of experiences meaningful to the world around each woman. Each story reflects a different experience based on the varying ages of the women, their different schooling and work experiences as well as the different religious sects, Sunni or Ismaili Muslim, to which they belong.

This study has permitted the women to talk about their lives and their experiences, in their own voices, thus allowing them "not only to develop and express a consciousness of gender but at the same time enabling them to verbalize their conception of social reality, regardless of whether it challenges a hegemonic world view of gendered arrangements in the society" (Maison-Bishop, 1994: 6). It depicts the women's constant struggle to manage both the pressures of development and the expectations of their ancestral way of life. While these women aspire to enter the "modern world," they are still required to participate in the "traditional world." In both worlds, they encounter gender, class, ethnic and religious barriers.

Methodology

The approach which has generally been accepted to conducting cross-cultural research is ethnography. Unlike positivist research methods which are often conducted in controlled, artificial settings, ethnographic research takes place in natural settings (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). In comparison to positivist methods which assume that there are social facts with an objective reality apart from individual beliefs and values, ethnographic research recognizes that reality is socially constructed through individual or collective perceptions of a situation (Spradley, 1979).

Previous cross-cultural research, particularly as it relates to women's experiences, has failed to take into account how different people themselves conceptualize social phenomena and has, instead, approached people as being passive and having a neutral and universal character. In recent years, various scholars have recognized that the rich cultural variations in the practices and conceptions of social phenomena can only be understood through detailed, in-depth research in different cultural settings.

With this in mind, I chose ethnography recognizing that the experiences of women in Booni Valley and their way of conceptualizing the evolving culture in which they live might best be captured by this methodology. I was committed to the view that a construct of the culture in Booni Valley, especially as it affects women, could only be developed from the women's patterns of social organization and communication. I have therefore used the women's experiences and have listened to their voices to come to an understanding of their conceptions of formal schooling and work.

The data in this study was collected from field research in 1994 during which in-depth unstructured interviews were conducted with 27 women in Booni Valley.[2] I also gathered data from participant observation, conversations and informal interviews. In addition, I used secondary sources collected from government and non-government organizations in Chitral District and Karachi. The data was gathered over a period of ten weeks during the months of August, September and October.

Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized into eight major chapters as follows:

Chapter I: "Introduction" presents the issues that led to the identification of the research question. It outlines the purpose and significance of the study and the methodological approach. The organization of the thesis is also presented.

Chapter II: "Women and Development" is divided into two main sections. The first part examines the theories and approaches which have been articulated for women in development. The second part is a literature review of the more practical aspect of the complexities of schooling and work in Third World women's lives. The second part also illustrates various gaps in the development literature on women's schooling and work and the shifts taking place in cross-cultural research today.

Chapter III: "Approaching the Study: Field Methods" articulates a rationale for selecting the methodology used in the study. The reader is provided with the steps and strategies used for collecting and interpreting the data.

Chapter IV: "Historical Perspectives: Pakistan and Chitral" gives an overview of the geography and history of schooling in Pakistan. It also provides a profile of women's life in rural Pakistan. The reader is presented with the physical features, history, culture and social and economic development in Chitral District, in which the research site, Booni Valley, is situated. In addition, the history of girls' schooling in

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[2]See Table 3-1 in Chapter III "Approaching the Study: Field Methods" for a description of the women.

Chitral District is articulated and indicators on formal education in the district are provided.

Chapter V: "Description of the Village: Booni Valley" presents the reader with a detailed description of the village. It describes the village location in relation to the rest of Chitral District and the facilities and economic characteristics of the valley. This chapter also takes the reader into the life of women in Booni Valley. Three perspectives are provided, each one representing a particular role of women in the valley today.

Chapter VI: "Women's Perceptions of Schooling" focuses on the women's perspectives of schooling and gives importance to their words as the women contextualize their experiences of schooling.

Chapter VII: "Women's Perceptions of Schooling and Work" explores women's views of schooling in relation to work and vice versa. Again, emphasis is placed on women's words as they give meaning to schooling and work in their lives.

Chapter VII: "Learning from the Women's Experiences" looks at the conclusions which can be drawn from the women's conceptions of schooling and work, and the implications of their perceptions in relation to the culture as a whole. Recommendations for further research are also provided.

CHAPTER II:

WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

Part 1: Theories and Approaches

In the past two and a half decades, studies relating to "women and development" have grown tremendously in academic scholarship, policymaking, and planning. Issues relating to Southern women's schooling and work comprise a large part of this growing literature. The United Nations Decade for Women (1976-85) has played a crucial role in this process by highlighting and publicizing the important, but previously invisible role of women in the economic and social development of their countries and communities, as well as the effects of Third World economies and social development on women. Women's relationship to the development process is complex and problematic. This complexity often remains unrecognized as subjects relating to women and development and education and development are not well integrated in the literature. While this study recognizes the complexity and interrelatedness of women's relationship to development and schooling, these two frameworks will be addressed separately in this section because of problems within the literature which rarely examines these two issues together. This section will first provide an overview of the theoretical trends for development in relation to women.

Trends in Conceptual Frameworks: WID, WAD, GAD

During the past two and a half decades, there has been a considerable shift in the theory of development as it relates to women (Kelly and Kelly, 1989; Moser, 1989; Rathgeber, 1990; Tinker, 1990). Rathgeber (1990) looks at the assumptions rooted in three different perspectives : *Women in Development* (WID); *Women and Development*; (WAD); *Gender and Development* (GAD). Each framework has led to the formulation of different development strategies for women. However, as Rathgeber notes, the linkages between theory and practice are often difficult to maintain, and "too frequently development practitioners lose sight of the theory underlying their work" (1990: 489).

Women in Development (WID)

The WID paradigm, which originated in the early 1970s, was a reaction to the welfare approach of the 1950s and 1960s. The welfare approach viewed women as passive recipients of development and assumed reproduction to be the most important and only role of women. The WID paradigm emerged as a result of Ester Boserup's (1970) study, *Women's Role in Economic Development*, which drew attention to the

differing effects of the development process on men and women and the fact that women had not shared equally in the benefits of economic growth. Boserup (1970) was also the first scholar to systematically delineate the roles of men and women in agrarian societies. Although Boserup's work was later criticized for oversimplifying women's roles and work, it was important in focusing attention on gender as a variable in development analysis. Based on Boserup's conclusions, American liberal feminists began to advocate the "integration" of women into economic development (Rathgeber, 1990). They emphasized the importance of legal and administrative changes to ensure equality for women in terms of participation in education and employment.

Although the WID paradigm drew attention to gender inequities in the development process and strategies within this perspective may have improved opportunities for a few women, the majority of women in agrarian societies of South nations did not experience any benefits. The WID paradigm did not challenge the broader development approach and, consequently, it was grounded in traditional modernization theory. The modernization theory falsely assumes that benefits of economic growth "trickle-down" to all segments of society in the South and North (Hill, 1983; Jacobson, 1993). The WID perspective did not challenge the structures of subordination in Southern and Northern nations. The impact of race, class and culture were overlooked in this approach (Beneria and Sen, 1981; Rathgeber, 1990). The WID paradigm has also received criticism for focusing primarily on women's productive work and ignoring the reproductive side of their work and lives.

Women and Development (WAD)

The Women and Development (WAD) paradigm ensued as a result of criticisms with the modernization process. This approach draws on neo-Marxist or dependency theory which questions the inequalities between North and South nations due to modernization. It also draws on Marxist analysis of class inequalities in Third World nations. The WAD paradigm focuses on the relationship between women and the development process rather than purely on strategies for the integration of women into development (Rathgeber, 1990). It affirms that women have always been an integral part of the development process, but their roles have been exploited (Gayfer, 1980; Rathgeber, 1990). Within the WAD framework, neo-Marxist feminists have emphazised development with an empowering aspect and which is based on the principles of participation, equity, self-reliance and social justice.

Although the WAD paradigm offers a more critical analysis of women's realities than WID, it gives little attention to gender discrimination within classes (Moser,

1989). It also tends to ignore differences such as race and ethnicity (Benaria and Sen, 1981; Moser, 1993; Rathgeber, 1990). Like the WID perspective, the WAD paradigm is not holistic because it ignores women's reproductive roles. Both persepectives fail to "undertake a full scale analysis of the relationship between patriarchy, differing modes of production, and women's subordination and oppression" (Rathgeber, 1990: 493). Development within the WAD framework has only widened the gap of social inequalities and increased women's poverty.

Gender and Development (GAD)

In the 1980s, the Gender and Development (GAD) paradigm emerged as an alternative to the previous paradigms (Rathgeber, 1990). Rooted in socialist feminist theory, this perspective concerns itself with the social relations of gender and, thus, views women's concerns not in isolation, but in relation to men (Gallin and Ferguson, 1991; Moser, 1993). Women and men play different roles in society and their gender differences are shaped by history, religion, ethnicity, economies and culture. The GAD paradigm questions the validity of men's and women's roles in different societies since women have almost always been "assigned to inferior and/or secondary roles" (Rathgeber, 1990: 494). The GAD paradigm is more holistic as it tries to understand women's positions by exploring the connections and contradictions among gender, class, race and international exploitation (Rathgeber, 1990). This perspective also recognizes that the way gender relationships are socially constructed is always temporarily and spatially specific (Gallin and Ferguson, 1991; Rathgeber, 1990; Wieringa, 1994).

The holistic approach of the GAD perspective is also seen through its attempt to link both women's productive and reproductive roles (Rathgeber, 1990; Moser,1989). The GAD model rejects the private and public dichotomy which has commonly been used to undervalue women's domestic roles (Rathgeber, 1990). It examines the "private sphere" of women's lives and gives special attention to the oppression and violence which women experience within their families (Jacobson, 1993; Rathgeber, 1990). The GAD paradigm recognizes that a preoccupation with only one aspect of women's lives such as their productive work is problematic. For example, projects designed to increase women's participation in income generating activities, without considering their reproductive roles, could double or even triple women's already heavy workload (Beneria and Sen, 1981; Sen and Grown, 1987). The GAD approach does not focus solely on either the productive or reproductive aspects of women's

lives, but attempts to understand the interrelationship between these roles (Rathgeber, 1990).

The GAD paradigm adheres to the empowerment approach whose origins are derived less from research of First World women and more from the emergent feminist writings and grass-roots organization experiences of Third World women (Mohanty, 1991; Sen and Grown, 1987). Women are no longer viewed as passive recipients of development, but as change agents who are committed to structural transformation and shifts in unequal power relations. The GAD model goes further than the WID and WAD perspectives in challenging the underlying assumptions of current social, economic and political structures, and in demanding a degree of commitment to structural change and power shifts (Rathgeber, 1990).

Because of its emancipatory nature, the GAD approach is perceived as a threatening approach to development by governments of Southern nations as well as many international aid agencies. Consequently, a very limited number of projects and activities are situated fully within the GAD perspective (Rathgeber, 1990).

Women's Gender Planning Needs: The GAD Perspective

In order to incorporate the gender issue into development, a gender planning framework that distinguishes between women's practical gender interests and strategic gender interests as well as their practical gender needs and strategic gender needs was developed by Molyneux (1985) and later made popular by Moser (1989; 1993). Moser (1989) emphasizes that issues like class, race, ethnicity and religion are not ignored in the rationale for gender planning; the focus is "specifically on gender precisely because this tends to be subsumed within class in so much of policy and planning" (Moser, 1989: 1802).

Practical gender needs respond to women's immediate needs and are easily identified by women. This approach is not linked to an overall strategy to reduce gender and income inequalities or to emancipate women. Strategic gender needs, however, relate to women's subordinate position to men and their consequent social and economic position (Grown and Sebstad, 1989; Moser, 1993; Wieringa, 1994). Strategic responses differ from one nation to another, are less easily identifiable by women and are more likely to transform the long-term structure and nature of gender relations as well as income inequalities (Moser,1989; 1993). The strategic gender needs approach recognizes women as important agents of change in addressing strategic gender needs through empowerment, consciousness-raising, collective organization, legal changes and political mobilization (Moser, 1993).

Most development agencies focus on projects and policies which reflect a practical response to gender needs as strategic gender needs are harder to identify (Moser, 1993). This represents only a partial approach to meeting women's gender needs and often results in women working longer hours or doing more unpaid work. Women themselves are rarely given the opportunity to recognize and articulate their strategic gender needs, and existing gender inequalities are often reinforced or even made worse (Grown and Sebstad, 1989; Moser, 1989; 1993). While it is important for both practical gender needs and strategic gender needs to be met, development planning and policies must aim to turn these practical needs into strategic responses. This is possible when practical interventions attempt to transform unequal structures of gender relations (Alsop, 1994; Grown and Sebstad, 1989; Moser,1993).

While Moser's approach towards identifying women's practical and strategic gender needs has provided a theoretical framework to assist in gender planning, it has received some criticism. Firstly, Wieringa (1994) argues that the focus should be more on who defines and plans a means to meet women's needs than on how the needs are categorized. Moser's framework is criticized for being too "top-down," as her model suggests that women express their concerns, but not be fully involved in the planning process. Referring to Foucault, Wieringa states that "the distinction between practical and strategic gender interests... is another attempt... not to explain reality, but rather to control and normalize it" (1994: 840). Wieringa also argues that Moser's model is too mechanistical and is oversimplified. Wieringa recognizes that women's realities, which are discursively constructed, are diverse and complex and "may contradict each other, may strengthen or alleviate the relations of oppression in which they live, and their impact may be felt differently at distinct times or phases of the lifecycle" (1994: 835).

Wieringa (1994) calls for a planning process which is able to adjust to the ongoing shifts and complexities in women's realities rather than bending women's needs to fit rigid and simplified theoretical tools. Thus it is more important that gender planning be concerned with the critical, contextualized analysis of gender oppression and with policies designed to transform this. Women should be directly involved in this process so that the interrelated nature of their different activites and roles can be taken into account. Wieringa (1994) recommends that gender planning should not be a one-time activity, but a constant dynamic process in which different interests are prioritized at different times.

While Wieringa has expressed some valid criticisms about Moser's model, Moser's (1989) framework is still useful as it provides a means to critique the content of development programs for women and to determine to some extent their impact on

women's lives. Equally important is Wieringa's (1994) insistence on the on-going needs identification and planning process in shifting and diverse social, economic and political climates. Moser's (1989) and Wieringa's (1994) gender planning frameworks can actually complement each other, and together they provide a more holistic approach to understanding women's gender needs.

Development Approaches and Women

Welfare Approach

Several development approaches designed to assist Southern nations' women have ensued from the above conceptual frameworks on women and the development process. The earliest approach is the welfare approach which is based on the assumptions that women are passive recipients of development. Projects situated within this framework aim to enhance women's domestic work which is perceived to be the most important role for women. Although this development model only addresses women's practical gender needs, it is still the most popular with governments and with some non-government organizations (Moser, 1989).

Equity Approach

The equity approach surfaced during the United Nation's Decade for women in the 1970s as a reaction to the welfare approach and the negative impact of the modernization development policy on women. The equity approach is the original WID approach and was influenced by Boserup's (1970) study, *Women's Roles in Economic Development*, and by Western feminism. Women were recognized as active participants in development and the primary goal was to gain equity for women in the development process. The equity approach recognizes women's practical gender need to earn a livelihood and it also attempts to meet an important strategic need by aiming to reduce inequalities in the gender division of labour (Moser, 1989).

However, the equity approach has been criticized for its assumption that women's economic independence is synonymous with equity. This approach is also problematic in its attempt to meet women's strategic needs through "top-down" legislative measures. Politically, the equity approach has been challenged by many development agencies and local governments who have labelled it an ethnocentric feminism (Moser, 1989).

Anti-Poverty Approach

The second WID approach, the anti-poverty approach, emerged in response to criticism of the original WID approach. The anti-poverty approach assumes that poverty rather than subordination is the main cause of economic inequality between men and women. This development approach aims to remove poverty and, consequently, to eliminate gender inequalities by providing women with employment and increasing their incomes (Moser, 1989; Wieringa, 1994). Although development agencies like the International Labour Organization (ILO) have adopted the anti-poverty approach, most of the income-generating projects have focused on meeting women's practical gender needs. Moser writes, "...unless employment leads to greater autonomy, it does not meet strategic gender needs" (1989: 1813). The predominant focus on women's productive role in the anti-poverty approach means that their reproductive role is largely ignored. Consequently, income-generating projects situated within the anti-poverty framework only succeed in extending women's working day and increasing their triple burden[3] (Moser, 1989).

Efficiency Approach

In the 1980s, a shift from the anti-poverty approach to the third and now predominant WID approach, the efficiency approach, took place. The emphasis moved from women toward development, on the assumption that increased economic participation for Southern nations' women is automatically linked with increased equity (Moser, 1989). This policy approach, which aims to increase efficiency and productivity through structural adjustment policies, is currently popular among international aid agencies and national governments.

However, the efficiency approach defines women's work only in terms of marketed goods and services and disregards women's reproductive work. This approach relies heavily on the elasticity of women's labour in both their reproductive and community managing roles, and only meets practical gender needs at the expense of longer working hours and increased paid work to achieve the goals of structural adjustment policies (Moser, 1989). Women's practical gender needs are often not met because these structural adjustment policies reallocate resources from social programs to increase economic growth and to earn wealth through foreign exchange by exporting goods. Cuts in social programs and an increase in the cost of living have affected rural populations, those with no formal education and, most of all, Southern nations'

[3]"Triple burden" refers to women's reproductive, productive and community managing work. These roles will be elaborated upon later in this chapter.

women. Third World women are further disadvantaged because the efficiency approach makes no attempt to address their strategic gender needs.

Empowerment Approach

A fifth development approach to women, the empowerment approach, has recently emerged in response to the previous unholistic development approaches. The empowerment approach, which is adhered to by the Gender and Development (GAD) perspective, differs from the previous approaches in its origins, in the causes, dynamics and structures of women's oppression which it identifies and in the strategies it proposes to change the position of Southern nations' women. The origins of this development approach are derived less from research of First World women, and more from the emergent feminist writings and grass-roots organization experiences of Third World women (Mohanty, 1991; Sen and Grown, 1987). Third World feminists like Mohanty (1991) have acknowledged the empowerment approach for its emphasis on gender inequalities and the fact that women experience oppression differently according to their race, class, colonial history, religion and current position in the international economic order. The process of women's empowerment also has two other important dimensions: critically challenging unequal gender relations and creatively shaping new social relations (Wieringa, 1994). This approach finds its roots in Freirean concepts of consciousness-raising through dialogue and political mobilization, but employs a stronger focus on gender discrimination (Freire, 1985; Wieringa, 1994). The advancement of women, particularly in Southern nations, requires a political agenda because their struggle for equality and justice occurs not only at the household level, but also at the national and international levels (Johnson-Odim, 1991).

Unlike previous development approaches, the empowerment approach is a "bottom-up" approach which recognizes the diverse aspects of women's lives and the important contributions women can make to development. This approach views women's empowerment in terms of providing them with the means to make their own choices, speak out on their own behalf, control their own lives, participate fully with men in determining and directing their common future, and thereby, increase their self reliance and internal strength (Gayfer, 1980; Moser, 1989; Wieringa, 1994). Women's reproductive and productive roles are equally acknowledged and the empowerment approach is committed to meeting both women's practical and strategic gender needs. Short-term strategies are identified as necessary to provide ways of responding to current crises and long-term strategies are required to eliminate the structures of inequality between genders, classes and nations through the collective

organization of Southern nations women as well as through government legislation (Moser, 1989).

However, with its goal of emancipation, Southern nations' governments and international aid agencies perceive the empowerment approach as a threatening approach. Consequently, there are only a limited number of projects and activities which aim to empower women according to the objectives of this development approach (Moser, 1989).

My study of women's schooling and work in Booni Valley recognizes the empowerment approach to development as the most relevant approach to the needs and conditions of the women in Booni Valley. Women's roles, needs and contributions are significant and unique, and they must be acknowledged. Not only would this acknowledgement help in identifying women's real gender needs, but it would also allow their input into development to be made visible. The notion of empowerment that my project adheres to is one which seeks to help all people to change their self-perceptions and to see clearly the important contributions that both women and men are already making to society.

Part 2: Practical Approaches: The Complexities of Schooling and Work in Third World Women's Lives

Women's Schooling

Shifts in Concepts of Knowing

The way people strategically orient themselves towards their environment and their fellows to satisfy physical, social and emotional needs is guided by their understanding of the *cosmos* - the world and their place in it. The framing of a *cosmology* is usually done unconsciously, in a culturally and historically specific manner (Branson and Miller, 1992). Branson and Miller write, "this mode of thought, of speech, possibly of writing, of reading, this way of seeing, this way of articulating the cosmos is their epistemology" (1992: 223); that is, it reflects and incorporates their ways of knowing in their society.

Modernization and urbanization have led people in Southern nations to revise their perceptions of the world and themselves (Kulick, 1992). In most instances, this social change imposed from the outside has resulted in epistemological problems as Southern nations' people are experiencing challenges to their world views (Branson and Miller, 1992). Western-style schooling has played a crucial role in this transformation of consciousness as new epistemologies and cosmologies are encountered via formal education.

Origin of Schooling

In order to understand the links between schooling and the wider socio-cultural environment of the Third World, it is necessary to examine theories developed in the context of understanding schooling in capitalist societies. Schooling in the West is an historically and culturally specific part of Western capitalist society. In the fifteenth century, an era of economic, political and religious upheaval, the triumph of science and the glorification of the scientific method -- rational and ordered --set the stage for progress firmly grounded in capitalist production (Branson and Miller, 1992). Since the Enlightenment period, the expansion of education in the new science has "followed, in form and content, the contours of a society egalitarian ideologically but unequal in practice, a practice shaped by unequal relations of production" (Branson and Miller, 1992: 232).

The Western formal education system, measured in terms of "schools" and the achievement of "literacy," continues to be ideologically committed to individual

achievement through competition and the transmission of secular based knowledge by formally, secularly-trained specialists (Branson and Miller, 1992). All knowledge is presented as tangible and accessible to everyone through schooling via books and formal classrooms. The focus on the scientific and empirically verifiable has been dominant in Western formal education, but has also been challenged and revised in the past twenty years. Formal schooling thus transforms consciousness to reproduce individualistic, egalitarian and competitive consciousness basic to capitalist relations of production and democracy (Branson and Miller, 1992).

Expansion of Schooling into Southern Nations

Western schooling in Third World countries was initiated and then spread by colonialists who set themselves up as an implicit "yardstick" against which to compare the "cultural Others" (Branson and Miller, 1992; Mohanty, 1991; Said, 1978). Southern nations people were deemed "backward" or "un/under developed" and were deemed needy of formal education to step onto the path to "progress" (Branson and Miller, 1992). Foundations for continued capitalist expansion were established and all local forms of knowledge, literate and non-literate, were seen as irrelevant to progress. In the process, local knowledge and language was reevaluated, dominated, displaced and redefined by new local political leaders of Third World countries, thus "wreaking epistemic violence[4] on the unschooled" (Branson and Miller, 1992: 235).

Since the 1960s, the expansion of formal schooling has continued in newly independent Southern nations, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels in urban centres (Bacchus, 1981; Schultz, 1961; Toh, 1987). In many regions, the expansion of schools and students has far exceeded the number of teachers, especially those who are adequately trained, as well as the number of buildings (Branson and Miller, 1992; McNamara, 1989).[5] The spread of schooling legitimizes equality of opportunity, freedom, individualism and progress (Rockhill, 1993). This strategy of expansion is based on theories of development, like the *human capital theory*, generated by Western economists during the 1960s (Schultz, 1961). The *human capital theory* recognizes education as the principle provider of a productive labour force which was necessary for a nation's economic growth (Bacchus, 1981; Schultz, 1961; Toh, 1987).

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[4]Epistemic violence results when people experience challenges to their world view as a result of theories imposed from other cultures. Said's (1978) *Orientalism* discusses the framing of reality from a Eurocentric context and the way Western ideology has been put forward as the ideal way to understand the world.

[5]The establishment of a "school" in the Third World does not necessarily equate to a the establishment of a building; many schools are held outdoors since buildings are unavailable.

Education is also perceived as a way to reduce social inequalities. Traditional knowledge and work as well as local languages continue to be devalued as people aspire to enter modern sector work through schooling (Branson and Miller, 1990; Kulick, 1992; Street, 1993).

However, the aforementioned assumptions have come into conflict with complex cultural and economic realities which prevent people from accessing the promises held by capitalism. There is little or no understanding of the relationship between modern education and the labour market transmitted through socialization. Unemployment and underemployment rates are also rising as existing economic structures have been unable to keep up with the large number of "qualified" people or with escalating population growth (Oxenham, 1984; Simmons, 1980; Toh, 1987). This unemployment problem is resulting in "diploma disease" as people are driven to exam-oriented education which involves cramming material from irrelevant curriculums (Dave and Hill, 1974; Oxenham, 1984). As well, structural inequalities are widespread as economic wealth continues to be held in the hands of a small elite who can afford formal education (Simmons, 1980). Some economists today suggest, therefore, that there is no evidence that schooling generates economic growth (Branson and Miller, 1992; Simmons, 1980).

People's perceptions of what is valuable as far as themselves, their work and their families have been reconstructed as a result of modernization. Schooling has been integral in transforming these relationships and the values of local cultures. Furthermore, formal education acts as an agent of social control (Freire, 1976). Competition, individualism, elitism, alienation and hierarchy have now become widespread in cultures where cooperation was once considered important in community life. Many young people in the Third World are discontent after completing their formal education because existing economic structures do not have the capacity to absorb them into modern sector work (Branson and Miller, 1992). Even their parents' expectations are work-oriented, and they too become disheartened when their children are unable to find employment in the modern sector. There is also little connection between school and village life. Once students leave school, it is difficult for them to return to traditional work which is still the backbone of most Southern nations' economies (Branson and Miller, 1992).

Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, a set of dispositions which unconsciously influence people "to act and react in certain ways...generating practices, perceptions and attitudes which are 'regulated'" (Thompson, in Bourdieu, 1991: 12) is doubly implicated in the schooling process. On the one hand, the habitus of people in Third

World nations has been changed by schooling; on the other hand, it interacts with the schooling context in ways which tend to lead youngsters from particular groups to fail in school. Bourdieu argues that,

> [t]he culture of the elite is so near to that of the school that children from the lower middle class [and *a fortiori* from the agricultural and industrial working class] can only acquire with great effort something which is *given* to the children of the cultivated classes - style, taste, wit - in short, those attitudes and aptitudes which seem natural in members of the cultivated classes and are naturally expected of them precisely because (in the ethnological sense) they are the *culture* of that class. (in Harker, 1990: 87)

The *habitus* redefines personal identity and world view. As a result, the younger generation who is now recognized as "educated" is being increasingly divorced from the "cosmos" of their ancestors (Branson and Miller, 1990; Kulick, 1992).

The understanding of schooling cannot be holistic unless gender issues are also addressed. The examination of formal education in Southern nations becomes even more complex and problematic when gender is also considered. As a result of gender biases within the traditional and modern sectors, Southern nations' women have not benefitted proportionally from economic growth and have not gained equal access to education (Boserup, 1970; Charlton, 1984; Joekes, 1987). The withdrawal rate of girls is much higher than for boys, and girls do not enter school as frequently as boys (Charlton, 1984; Hill, 1983). Indicators from 1987-88 reveal that 50% of the girls in rural Pakistan begin primary school compared to 88% of the boys (Pakistani Planning Commission, 1987). Men's schooling has been favored over women's schooling as a result of the complex combination of Western patriarchal relationships and patriarchal values which have survived from the pre-colonial culture (Hill, 1983; Sivard, 1985; Smock, 1981). Hill writes, "when schooling was/[is] available for girls, it was/[is] usually justified on the grounds that they needed/[need] training to be wives, mothers and the first educators of their children" (1983: 75). Although policies have been introduced to ensure that all citizens receive equal education and to prioritize women's schooling, social and economic indicators of development show that women's opportunities have not improved greatly (Mumtaz and Shaheed, c. 1985). Third World women, particularly those in rural areas, continue to form the largest disadvantaged group in terms of access to education (Mumtaz and Shaheed, c. 1985; Sivard, 1985). Their situation is compounded by gender, class and ethnic bias (Jacobson, 1993). Most of these women work in unpaid and undervalued domestic and farm work,

undervalued as a result of cultural and economic factors as well as a tendency in "modern" contexts to assign value by educational requirements. This work is also not recognized as work because it does not generate any visible assets (Beneria, 1989; Jacobson, 1993).

Research on Women's Schooling

Research on women's schooling in the Third World reveals the complexity of women's situations. Women are disadvantaged from both the macro and micro levels. At the macro level, women's education has suffered from government priorities toward men's schooling (Charlton, 1984; Kelly, 1984; Mumtaz and Shaheed, c. 1985). Investment in schooling must also compete with industrial development and defense which is recognized as a priority to a nation's modernization process. Pakistan's military expenditures in 1988 accounted for 29.5% of the GNP while education expenditures around the same period were approximately 2.6% (UNDP, 1992). Political and bureaucratic competition may hinder policy implementation as well (Charlton, 1984).

Furthermore, governments focus their plans on expanding education at the secondary and tertiary level in urban areas as a way to secure employment in the modern sector (Simmons, 1980; Toh, 1987). This situation has been found by Bacchus (1981) in some of the African Commonwealth countries like Sierra Leone, Malawi and Tanzania and by Merchant (1992) and Nabi (1991) in Pakistan. Urban schools are inaccessible to women in rural areas due to cultural norms, economic constraints, geographic conditions and distance (Brown, 1984; Hayes, 1985; Merchant, 1992; Nabi, 1991; Preston, 1984). In Nigeria girls' personal educational aspirations are influenced by their family location. 63% of urban girls, compared to 26.3% of rural girls, aspired to go on to higher education (Akande, 1987).

At the micro level, women's schooling is also affected by dynamics within the community and the household. Women's formal education is seen as having a high opportunity cost because households would suffer if girls were absent from their reproductive and productive responsibilities (Preston, 1984). Girls also leave their parents home after marriage so parents believe that their daughters should repay their debt for nurturance by working at home before going to their husbands' homes (Bruce, 1989). In Taiwan girls are sent to work in factories so that they can earn money to pay for their brothers' schooling (Greenhalgh in Bruce, 1989). Rural parents with very little money will send their sons to school before their daughters because men have a better chance of getting high income-generating employment off the farm (Ashby,

1985). Sons' employment is important to parents in rural areas where there is no other form of social security (Bruce, 1989). Ashby's (1985) study in Nepal also reveals a priority of boys' education over girls' due to beliefs that women's work is within the household and formal education is not necessary for this type of work.

With increasing poverty due to modernization, the growing rate of male migration and more men working off the farms, women's workload within the household has increased. Consequently, women lean heavily on the contributions of their children, particularly girls. Jacobson writes, "the increasing tendency in many areas of keeping girls out of school to help with their mothers' work virtually ensures that another generation of females will grow up with poorer prospects than their brothers" (1993: 75). Chabaud (1970) reports that the less education there is among mothers, the less likely their daughters are to receive any formal education.

Socio-cultural factors are also recognized as barriers to girls' schooling. For example, *purdah*, the institutionalized system of seclusion and veiling of women in some Muslim cultures, has restricted women's access to education (Nabi, 1991). The ideology of *purdah* has also resulted in segregated schooling for girls and boys (Nabi, 1991). Commenting on the religious and social norms that influence girls' access to education, Merchant (1992) draws an interesting conclusion in her study in the Gilgit Agency of Northern Pakistan. She notes that in this predominantly Muslim society, where three sub-sects of Islam -- Sunni, Shia Ithna'ashari and Shia Ismailis -- live side by side, the Shia Ismaili parents accept most readily the importance of formal schooling for girls following the directive of their spiritual leader, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV (Merchant, 1992: 116). Merchant (1992) also notes that Ismaili girls are given more liberty to participate in activities outside the domestic scene.

Traditional values have also been recognized as affecting women's participation in school. Nabi (1991) states that, in some places, women are not sent to school because their education is perceived as a threat to tradition and to the status quo. Nabi (1991) remarks that even if girls were "permitted" to go to school, early marriage and a lifestyle that is very demanding of their labour leave them with very little time for studying.

Tied to both macro and micro problems are factors within the education system itself which hinder women's participation in school. Firstly, curriculums are designed mainly to certify people for well-paying jobs in the modern sector. These curriculums are irrelevant to women's lives as most women are not absorbed into the modern sector. Women's needs are not included in the educational content (Dave and Hill, 1974; Dore, 1976; Nabi, 1991). Moreover, modern theories of education stress

educating all children in the same way at school, but gender stereotyping is evident throughout educational content (Charlton, 1984).

Current research on women's schooling in the Third World has brought out the complexity of women's situation with regards to schooling. However, most research splits the public and private realms and reinforces the same gendered practices through which women are oppressed in their everyday lives (Rockhill, 1992). While research of this nature is important to provide a general picture of women's situation, it often presupposes Southern nations' women to be passive recipients of schooling, and, in some instances, to experience the same problems as women worldwide. Mohanty (1991) has criticized the construction of "third world woman" as a singular universal subject and the descriptions of these women which attempt to develop a common explanation and analysis. Although a pattern of the issues affecting women's participation in schooling is evident throughout most of the Third World, the way this pattern is perceived at different periods in history and in specific cultural situations has not been documented (Kulick and Stroud, 1992; Street, 1992). A lack of research on the way people perceive and apply schooling and literacy in their daily lives leads to a downplay of the creativity and cultural concerns of those people being taught to read and write (Kulick and Stroud, 1992).

Current Shifts in Research

Ethnographic studies on literacy by Kulick and Stroud (1993), Kulick (1992), Farah (1992) and Rockhill (1992) are examples of a shift in the literature toward an understanding of people's perceptions of literacy and, to some extent, schooling in their lives. Kulick and Stroud's study (1992) in a Papua New Guinea village, Gapun, shows that newcomers to literacy learned at school are not necessarily passive "victims," but take an active role in employing this literacy as a "resource." The people of Gapun have their own ideas about reading and writing, generated from their own cultural concerns. Rather than being "transformed by literacy, the villagers have "transformed" it themselves.

While Kulick and Stroud's research does not specifically address gender, Rockhill's (1992) and Farah's (1992) studies both take into account gender issues pertaining to literacy. Rockhill's (1992) study on the politics of literacy among Hispanic women in Los Angeles illustrates that the way women live with sexual oppression is integrally connected to race, class and ethnicity. She notes that it is difficult to find studies which consider the simultaneity of gender, race, ethnicity and class as lived together in the "mosaic of people's lives" (Rockhill, 1992: 157). Her

study demonstrates that "the construction of literacy is embedded in the discursive practices and power relations of everyday life; it is socially constructed, materially produced, morally regulated, and carries a symbolic significance which cannot be captured by its reduction to any one of them" (1992: 171).

Rockhill's research has shown multiple and contradictory ways in which women view literacy and schooling. The women experience literacy as both a threat and a desire. For them, to learn English means to go to school and to enter a world that holds the promise of change. However, this change represents a threat to all that the women know. It also represents a threat to their male partners and to traditional domestic authority relations.

Farah's (1992) study on literacy practices in a rural village, Chaman, in Pakistan, also shows a paradox of threat and desire in women's experiences of literacy. Literacy for women through the *Islami sabaq* (religious knowledge, for example, like the reading the *Holy Quran*) has existed for at least two generations. It is approved in the community and is expected to teach appropriate and pious behavior. However, girls' schooling in the community is quite new, and attitudes towards women's secular education are still ambivalent. The application of women's literacy to non-Islamic domains is, therefore, problematic.

Nearly all the women with whom Farah (1992) spoke had a desire to be literate or for their daughters to be literate. These desires varied from specific and practical goals like "becoming a doctor" to more general goals such as "learning good manners" (Farah, 1992: 244). However, this desire has been "mixed with fears of challenging the acceptable behavior of women and thus threatening their status in the community" (Farah, 1992: 246). Going to school and learning to read and write are also perceived as potential threats to the authority of the parents, brothers and husbands. When women's literacy is used to accomplish household tasks like reading letters or reading religious books, the ability for women to read and write is desired by everyone. However, it represents a threat when it extends outside the household (Farah, 1992).

The understanding of women's schooling requires detailed, in-depth accounts of actual practice in different cultural settings. In order to put the missing piece of the puzzle back into research, studies must now take into account how women themselves actually think about schooling, their access to schooling and how they apply their schooling skills in their daily lives (Kulick and Stroud, 1992; Street, 1992). Rockhill writes that it is "important to look at schooling, both in terms of its symbolic meaning and the material realities in women's lives" (1992: 172). My study of women's perceptions of schooling in Booni Valley is in response to the gap in the literature on

gender and schooling. My research is also in response to the limited research on women's schooling in Chitral District.

Women's Working World

Women's working world in rural areas of Southern nations is complex and involves many forms of labour, including subsistence production, domestic work, informal marketing and paid employment in the formal sector (Beneria, 1992; Sivard, 1985). It differs from the men's working world in the type of work, the hours of work done per day, income, status, and patterns of entering and leaving the paid labour market (Sivard, 1985). One important aspect of women's working world is its contribution toward the survival and well-being of the approximately three billion people living in the subsistence economies of Third World nations (Charlton, 1984; Jacobson, 1993). Women provide critical economic support to their families, alone or in conjunction with their spouses, by earning income in cash or kind. However, much of women's labour is underestimated, unrecognized and undervalued due to androcentric and Eurocentric theories and cultural attitudes about gender divisions of labour (Acosta-Belen and Bose, 1990; Beneria, 1992; Cashman, 1991; Grown and Sebstad, 1989; Jacobson, 1993). During the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-85) it was estimated that women receive only 10% of the world's wealth, possess less than 1% of the world's wealth, constitute 75% of the world's undernourished along with children, perform 60-89% of all agricultural work and account for 50% of all food production (Gayfer, 1980).

This section will provide an overview of the various components of women's work in the Third World. The importance of women's work to their families, communities and nations and the gender biases that undermine the value and importance of women's essential contributions will be examined. Women's work will be discussed in terms of their reproductive and productive roles at the household level and their involvement in the formal sector of the broader socio-economic sphere. These distinctions will provide a clear understanding of the complex nature of women's work and the problems encountered in accounting for this work (Moser, 1993).

Women's "Triple Role"

In most subsistence economies of the Third World, women have a *triple role* which they undertake primarily within and around the household (Moser, 1993: 27). "Women's work" includes *reproductive work* comprising the "childbearing/rearing responsibilities and domestic tasks undertaken by women, required to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force" (1993: 29). It also includes *productive work* which "comprises work done by both men and women for payment in

cash or kind. It includes both market production with an exchange value, and subsistence/home production with an actual use-value, but also a potential exchange value" (Moser, 1993: 31). Women also take on *community managing work* as an extension of their reproductive role. This role, which ensures the provision and maintenance of scarce resources of collective consumption, like water and health care, is voluntary unpaid work, undertaken in "free time" (Moser, 1993: 31).

Traditionally, rural women have been engaged primarily in production for household use or consumption rather than in production for cash or exchange. Their roles have rarely extended outside the household realm for two reasons. Firstly, their reproductive role reduces their mobility as well as their time and energy to carry out even their farming responsibilities. Secondly, socio-cultural factors, like religion, class/caste, cultural attitudes and formal legal systems, keep women home-bound and relegate them to an inferior legal status in many Third World countries. These socio-cultural factors also reduce women's economic options and social interactions and restrict their access to the information and resources needed to respond to economic opportunities (Saito and Spurling, 1992). In patrilineal cultures found in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, much of the sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, women's access to land and their security is tied to their marital status and the number of sons they bear (Jacobson, 1993). Men do not generally assist in domestic tasks as such tasks are considered below their status.

Today, the role of rural women has also been affected greatly by industrialization which is encouraging and, at times, forcing women to earn cash to help meet basic food, clothing and shelter needs (Charlton, 1984). Although women's position and participation in productive activities were parallel to those of men in many pre-colonial societies, their role is now being increasingly viewed as subservient to men's roles (Acosta-Belen and Bose, 1990). Various development approaches usually bypass women's needs thereby reducing their productivity and perpetuating occupational and wage discrimination (Jacobson, 1993; Saito and Spurling, 1992).

One of the main reasons that development planners fail to address women's needs is the conceptual, methodological and theoretical problems surrounding traditional notions of "work" (Beneria, 1992). Much of women's work remains invisible because traditional definitions of "work" have failed to capture the various roles women undertake at the household level (Beneria, 1992; Grown and Sebstad, 1989; Jacobson, 1993). Labour force statistics and national income accounts have been historically designed to collect information based on capitalist conventions of economic activity that is part of the market or paid exchanges of good and services. Although

there have been some attempts to incorporate subsistence farming into GDP accounts, methodological inconsistencies have resulted in significant statistical disparities between countries (Beneria, 1992). Women's activities such as producing food crops, collecting firewood and gathering fodder are not counted as economically productive because they take place in the nonwage economy for the purpose of household consumption (Charlton, 1984; Jacobson, 1993). Women's reproductive work has been perceived as a "natural" phenomenon and there has been little attempt to include it in government record-keeping (Beneria, 1992). Women's agricultural work and their participation in the informal sector is also viewed as an extension of their domestic work. Consequently, women's work is undervalued, and women are viewed as "unproductive" by government statisticians, development planners, the men in their communities and even the women themselves (Bruce, 1989; Jacobson, 1993; Moser, 1993). The invisible nature of women's contributions feeds into social perceptions of women as "dependents" rather than "producers" and results in welfare-oriented approaches for women (Jacobson, 1993). In contrast, men's contributions are recognized and they benefit from most development planning and policy strategies because they are mainly involved in productive sectors outside the household and retain control of productive resources as well as the income generated from them.

Gender Roles, the Family and the Household

The tendency to downplay the importance of women's contributions can be attributed to three interrelated assumptions: household structures consisting of a nuclear family of husband, wife and children; the ideology of the male "breadwinner"; the household as a natural socio-economic unit within which adults share equal control over resources and decision-making power (Moser, 1993). The nuclear family structure is assumed to be concomitant with modernization and urbanization (Jacobson, 1993; Moser,1993). However, complex extended family structures are still characteristic of many low-income households in Southern nations. Moser notes that "where it remains vital for low-income survival strategies, as happens in countries experiencing stringent adjustment conditions, extended families of widely different and complex structures may not only survive but increase in numbers" (1993: 17).

The most important non-nuclear family household structure still "invisible" in many planning contexts is the female-headed household (Bruce, 1989; Jacobson, 1993; Moser, 1993). Two main types have been identified: *de jure* and *de facto* female headed households. *De jure* woman-headed households are those in which the male partner is permanently absent due to separation or death, and the woman is legally

single, divorced, or widowed (Moser, 1993). The *de facto* female-headed household is one in which the male partner is "temporarily" absent. In the recent decades, there has been a rise in the number of *de facto* female-headed households as poverty has forced men to migrate in search of employment. This absenteeism has resulted in a reduction in the amount of labour and income contributed to the family by men and an increased pressure on women to make up labour shortages by carrying out traditionally male activities as well as their own (Jacobson, 1993). Sivard notes that women are the sole breadwinners in one-fourth to one-third of the families in the world (1985: 11). Their income-generating activity for the purpose of household consumption becomes particularly important and vital when there is no available cash to buy these essential goods. False assumptions of male head ship and the household as a unit result in men receiving development allocations and aid while women are reduced to worse penury (Bruce, 1993).

Assumptions of male head ship are linked to conventional economic development notions that increasing men's access to productive resources will raise their income and will thus improve the welfare of the whole family (Acosta-Belen and Bose, 1990; Jacobson, 1993; Moser, 1993). However, these notions have proven erroneous. Women work about twelve to eighteen hours per day compared to men who work for approximately eight to twelve hours per day. The use and exchange value of women's work shows that they are the most productive labourers in the Third World (Jacobson, 1993). They contribute more of their income, in cash or in kind, to meet their family's basic needs (Bruce, 1989; Jacobson, 1993; Sivard, 1985). In most subsistence economies, men have less responsibility than women to produce food and other goods solely for household consumption. Thus men spend most of their time developing businesses or pursuing personal interests (Bruce, 1989; Jacobson, 1993). As Bruce notes, "gender ideologies support the notion that men have a right to personal spending money, which they are perceived to need or deserve, and that women's income is for collective purposes" (1989: 986).

In much of sub-Saharan Africa, for example, men grow cash crops and keep the income from them either to increase their personal consumption or to raise the productivity of their own crops. Women, however, use their land primarily for subsistence crops to feed their families. Because they are also expected to provide shelter, food, school fees and medical care for their children and for themselves, some of these women double their workload by engaging in income-generating activities to supplement their farming income (Jacobson, 1993). Even in certain South Asian countries where men are culturally responsible for providing shelter and paying their

children's school expenses, women's productivity comprises a substantial, if not a predominant, part of a family's income (Bruce, 1989).

Overall, women who retain control over income and expenditures spend more on their children's food, health care, school and clothes than men whose outside world claims a substantial amount of their earnings (Bruce, 1989; Jacobson, 1993). Even when overall income is clearly inadequate, men generally withhold a proportion of their wages for personal use (Bruce, 1989). The allocational priorities which women apply to their own income and other income they control can be explained by the priority that they place on attaining a better life for their children (Bruce, 1989).

Certain trends which have ignored women's important role in agriculture have also affected women's access to resources, such as agricultural technology. Agricultural modernization has been perceived as one of the ways of increasing men's access to productivity and, consequently, increasing their income (Bourque and Warren, 1990; Hill, 1983; Jacobson, 1993). As Hill notes, this is a result of "predominantly male and predominantly European agricultural extension officers in many colonial or immediately post-colonial countries [who] have tended to assume that agriculture is a male responsibility" (1983: 70). While mechanization has reduced or replaced men's traditional labour, it has done little to lighten women's workload and, in some instances, has even increased their workload without increasing their income. For example, men are able to plough their fields quickly and easily with tractors, but women still have to perform the manual task of weeding and have larger areas to weed (Bourque and Warren, 1990; Hill, 1983; Jacobson, 1993). In many Third World regions, mechanization has made it easy to expand fields and cultivate for cash cropping. Not only are women deprived of the income from cash crops, but their access to land for subsistence farming and to forest resources from commons lands is severely limited (Jacobson, 1993).

Women's access to land for subsistence farming and to forest resources is also affected by privatization of land once jointly owned and controlled by villagers and accessible to women. Legal and cultural obstacles which favor male ownership and control of productive resources prevent women from obtaining title to land. Jacobson writes,

> [l]andtitles invariably are given to men because governments and international agencies routinely identify them as heads of their households, regardless of whether or not they actually support their families. Women's rights to land are now subject to the wishes of their husbands or the whims of male-dominated courts and community councils. (1993: 71)

With women's access to land being limited, women depend more and more on sons for access to land. Furthermore, when women's labour increases, they depend more on their children for assistance. Consequently, children, particularly daughters, are kept out of school. This trend also results in an increase in population rates and, in turn, increases the demand on the already scarce resources and affects women's access to land (Jacobson, 1993).

Development planning is also based on a third erroneous assumption of Western theory that resources and decision-making power are distributed equally in families. Within households, the distribution of income is usually according to status rather than need (Jacobson, 1993; Bruce, 1989). Studies in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan have shown a discrimination in the allocation of resources with sons recieving more and better food, healthcare, and education than their sisters (Jacobson, 1993).

Gender bias within the household and the broader socio-economic context is a leading cause of poverty. The importance placed on production with a monetary use and exchange value as well as the notion held by men that housework is not "work" has resulted in many women perceiving their work and themselves as valueless and inferior (Bruce, 1989). Cashman has noted that it is important to acknowledge women's knowledge and their survival strategies which are indispensible in a world where their resources are scarce.

Paid Employment: Informal and Formal Sectors

As modernization results in various social and economical transformations, the need for cash is an inescapable reality for families in subsistence economies of Southern nations. Even in the most isolated communities, money is of increasing significance because it functions as the general means of exchange. This is particularly evident in the mountainous region of northern Pakistan where agriculture is the main source of livelihood. Geographical conditions in this area make agricultural production low and insufficient for most families to maintain a susbsistence level of consumption. Shifts in patterns of consumption due to rising expecations have also increased the need for a cash income (Lawson McDowall, 1994; Merchant, 1992).

More and more Southern nations' women are turning to income-generating activities in the informal sector as well as activities in the formal labour force to ensure the survival of their families. Their contributions from subsistence production are no longer enough for household consumption because their access to agricultural land is slowly diminishing with increasing population growth rates, privatization of land and

cash cropping activities (Charlton, 1984; Jacobson, 1993). Furthermore, male migration, marital instability, or the death of husbands has resulted in a growing number of women who are the sole household supporters (Ibrahim, 1989; Jacobson, 1993). Ibrahim (1989) points to a movement towards jobs that pay an individual wage instead of wages that support a family, a trend which is causing women to move into the labour market in order to supplement inadequate male earnings. Grown and Sebstad comment that money also matters to women "because it is the route to the accumulation of wealth, power, and status" (1989: 940). Programs and policies are also designed primarily around monetary activities. Although women's need and desire for money income is increasing, their ability to earn income is constrained by the forces that impel them to seek renumerative work.

While women's economic contributions are usually underestimated by the data, current statistics of Southern women's participation in the paid labour force has shown both an absolute and a relative increase (Grown and Sebstad, 1989; Sivard, 1985). In 1991 the United Nations reported that 41% of world's women aged 15 and over - 828 million - were officially measured as economically active (United Nations, 1991). ILO (in Grown and Sebstad, 1989) reports indicate that between 1950 and 1985, there was an increase in the proportion of all adult women seeking paid employment as well as in the female share of the total labour force. In 1950, 37% of women in Southern nations were counted as labour force participants, and this number had risen to 42% by 1985 (ILO in Grown and Sebstad, 1989). However, huge regional variations are masked by these aggregate numbers. For example, in Latin America women's labour force participation rate was 25%; in South Asia, 36%; in Africa, 42%; and in East Asia, 52% (ILO in Grown and Sebstad, 1989).

While the greater visibility of women in the economic sphere can be taken as an indicator of economic progress for women, this advancement is more complex and uncertain than the increasing numbers may suggest (Ibrahim, 1989; Sivard, 1985). The available information is limited in its coverage of the types of work women do, their status and pay and some of the problems women encounter as they move into the world of paid labour (Sivard, 1985). Even this information shows that the large influx of women into the labour market has not significantly changed the nature of work for the majority of women. It has done little to reconcile women's productive and reproductive roles, to narrow the gap between women's and men's wages or to reduce the increasing poverty now consuming the world's women (Sivard, 1985). In the following section these issues will be examined as they pertain to the informal and formal sectors.

Informal Sector

In Southern nations, women are concentrated heavily in informal sector activities, including self-employment. The ILO has defined this sector "as that set of economic activities characterized by relative ease of entry, reliance on indigeneous resources, family ownership, small scale of operations, labour intensity, reliance on skills acquired outside the formal educational system, and unregulated and competitive markets" (in Grown and Sebstad, 1989: 940). The informal sector is a residual enterprise, often completely dependent on the larger formal employment sector (Grown and Sebstad, 1989; Sivard, 1985). Women's work in the informal sector includes activities such as marketing of fruit and vegetables as well as handicraft work.

The informal sector is crucial to the survival strategies of many Third World women. Women enter the informal sector because of necessity and convenience and because it opens up important long-term opportunities in situations where declining or inadequate salaried employment is closed to women (United Nations, 1991). Not only do women require less formal education to work in the informal sector, but there are fewer biases in favor of men. It also allows women to comply with cultural norms that keep women near the home, and there is less conflict between working hours and household tasks.

However, the informal sector is not secure and productivity is often low (Sivard, 1985). While women's participation is rising in the informal sector, their returns are declining. This is due to the absence or high cost of credit, lack of government support, exploitation by larger firms controlling raw materials or markets. Studies indicate that there is a greater difference between men's and women's earnings in the informal sector than in the formal sector (Sivard, 1985). Women in the informal sector are vulnerable to even slight deteriorations in an economy. With the increasing number of people entering the informal sector, particularly in countries with high debts, informal sector returns are falling even more than in the formal sector (Sivard, 1985). Eroding resource bases no longer generate what women need most: cash income (Grown and Sebstad, 1989: 940).

Despite women's high rate of participation in the informal sector, much of their work in this sector has been underestimated. Beneria claims that there is a lack of statistical information on workers engaged in this area due to the "underground character of at least an important proportion of this sector as well as from its unstable, precarious and unregulated nature" (1989: 1549). The hidden nature of informal sector activities creates many problems in obtaining reliable data and elaborating sources of systematic data collection. For example, only those who engage in visible activities in

visible spaces are counted; those who work in "invisible" activities in the home are ignored (Grown and Sebstad, 1989). In some instances, women's involvement in the informal sector is also viewed as an extension to their domestic responsibilities, and is, therefore, undervalued and not recognized as being economically productive (Charlton, 1984)

Formal Sector

The formal sector is referred to as "that set of activities in private or publicly-owned enterprises or in the civil service which conform generally to tax and labour laws and other state regulations" (Grown and Sebstad, 1989: 940). Unlike the informal sector, it is comprised of regulated, high-growth, dynamic enterprises which use a substantial amount of physical, human and financial capital (Grown and Sebstad, 1989). Women's work within the formal sector involves various activities, including professional, clerical, skilled and unskilled work mainly in larger establishments in industry, services and agriculture (Ibrahim, 1989).

Women are increasingly engaging in formal sector activities for a number of reasons, some of which parallel the reasons for their involvement in the informal sector. Increasing levels of educational attainment, rising costs of living, growing number of female headed households and increasing self-awareness have influenced women's participation in formal sector activities (Grown and Sebstad, 1989). For many women, formal sector work also represents a desirable alternative to the options available to them in domestic service or the informal sector. There is more status associated with formal paid employment than subsistence farming and informal sector work which is generally viewed as an off-shoot to subsistence production (Charlton, 1984; Sivard, 1985). Income and job security are better and more dependable for women, and they may also have increased protection under the law. Moreover, it gives women the opportunity to be exposed to modern work environments and to form supportive networks with fellow workers (Sivard, 1985).

Despite women's need and desire for cash income, entering the formal paid labour market is not a simple process. Women have to overcome many economic and social barriers within the household as well as at the workplace in the broader socio-economic context (Ibrahim, 1989; Sivard, 1985). Some women are unable to join the paid labour market because they face transport difficulties. Cultural norms, like the practice of *purdah* amongst some Muslim women, also prevent them from working outside the household and from contributing money to the household (Malik, 1993; Saeed, 1990).

Another social obstacle faced by women is a double work burden resulting from their responsibility to nurture their children and manage their households even when they take on full-time wage employment (Ibrahim, 1989). Some women are even restricted from engaging in wage labour because they are unable to coordinate work schedules with their child care responsibilities and seasonal subsistence farming duties. Most women find it easier to work before they are married since they do not have to juggle dual responsibilities of reproductive and productive tasks. Many women can no longer count on childcare assistance from female relatives because of transformations within the household structure from extended to nuclear families (Ibrahim,1989). The help once provided by older daugthers is now in conflict with the desire of some families to keep their daughters in school for as long as possible (Ibrahim, 1989). There are also no "tradeoffs" between husbands and wives, and mothers must, therefore, balance the conflict between market work and child care by reducing sleep and leisure (Bruce, 1989: 982). Employers who expect flexibility from their workers also tend to hire men rather than women.

Women also encounter various economic barriers in market activities of the formal sector which place them in a relatively disadvantaged position. They face much discrimination in the type of jobs open to them (Sivard, 1985). Women are often clustered around jobs at the lower tier of the occupational ladder as a result of discrimination built into the structure of job market (Ibrahim, 1989). Armstrong and Armstrong (1990) also note that women's disadvantaged positions in the labour market are due to a vertical differentiation which relegates them to the lower echelons of the paid labour market. While there is some gender cross-over in terms of work, it is still quite rare for women to take up management positions at the top of the pay scale which are mainly filled by men (Sivard, 1985). According to Kenya's Economic Survey (1992), the proportion of women in traditional male domains like managerial and supervisory positions was miniscule.

Women generally tend to cluster around a limited number of occupational groups in the commercial, social and personal services sectors which are considered to be traditionally female jobs (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1990; Ibrahim, 1989; Sivard, 1985; Smock, 1981). In a number of instances, for example, women enter into fields like teaching and nursing which are an extension of their caregiving and supportive roles at home (Sivard, 1985). For example, Kenya's Economic Survey (1992: 45) shows that in 1990, 24% of the total number of women employed in wage labour worked in the educational services sector as opposed to 14.8% of the total number of men employed in this area. Merchant (1992: 194) also illustrates a similar situation for

women in the Gilgit Agency where most women in the paid labour force are employed in professional occupations such as teaching, nursing or social organizations.

Many women also cluster around dead-end jobs like assembly lines in industries, which are no longer acceptable to men. Many companies hire young, unmarried women whom they view as "a flexible and [disposible] labour force that will expand and contract with the business cycles" (Charlton, 1984: 141). Most positions for which women are hired require limited skills, are low in status, offer no job security, have little potential for advancement and are unlikely to provide training or career development (Charlton, 1984; Sivard, 1985).

Third World women's work in the paid labour force is also affected by government structural policies that aim to increase productivity through improved efficiency and that view women's economic participation in development as a link to both efficiency and equity. Such policies are often shifting and result in women overworking or not being guaranteed a job because they do not take into account women's reproductive roles.

Because much of women's work is deemed to require less responsibility and skill, a hierarchy in pay results with women receiving less pay than men. This hierarchy in wages reflects gender relations in occupations. Sivard writes that "indirect discrimination which results in lower pay levels [for the same or similar jobs done by men and women] persists in many forms, implict in recruitment procedures, and training and promotion policies which favor men" (1985: 14). Although government legislations have aimed at diminishing such discriminations in some industrialized countries, substantial gender differentials in wages and promotions persist. In countries like Canada where women have made inroads into male-dominated, high status, high-paying jobs, women's earnings are still only 71% of men's (United Nations, 1991: 88). Few Third World nations have made gender discrimination in the workplace an issue. In addition, men are more likely to have regular full-time work and receive greater seniority and benefits.

Labour market segregation and inequality reflect cultural patterns and stereotypes which are hard to change (Sivard, 1985). A complex combination of colonial oppression and patriarchal values extant from the pre-colonial culture has restricted women's productive functions to a selected range of activities at the lowest end of the hierarchical scale (Acosta-Belen and Bose, 1990; Smock, 1981). Occupational segregation is further affected by cultural norms which only allow women to work in the presence of other women in settings like educational institutions and health care facilities and which are resistant to change (Ibrahim, 1989; Saeed, 1990).

Women's lack of formal education also prevents them from reaching supervisory and management positions. The already overcrowded labour market cannot accommodate the number of women who want to work. Many women are thus compelled to work for low wages and in insecure positions which do not reflect their skills or education (Ibrahim, 1989). Acosta-Belen and Bose refer to women as the "last colony" because "women and colonies are both low-wage and non-wage producers, share structural subordination and dependency, and are overwhelmingly poor" (1990: 310).

While improvements have been made within the paid labour market, if present trends continue, earnings differentials between women and men will widen, working conditions and occupational mobility will decline and women will become an even more disposable labour force (Ibrahim, 1989: 1099). The conceptual evolution in the study of women and development calls for research to pay attention to the ignored sectors of working women who are essential to Third World economies. My study will examine the various sectors of women's working world in Booni Valley. It will critically examine women's perspectives of their work and the way it has been impacted by formal schooling.

CHAPTER III:

APPROACHING THE STUDY - FIELD METHODS

Research Problem

The purpose of my study was to understand women's perspectives on schooling and work in Booni Valley in Chitral District of Northern Pakistan.

Choice of Research Site

I chose to conduct my study in Booni Valley, the sub-division headquarters of Upper Chitral for a number of reasons, the two most important ones being accommodation and availability of a translator. Arrangements were made for me to live at the Aga Khan Hostel, Booni where I had the opportunity to interact daily with about 45 girls who attend the local Government Girls High School. Furthermore, the matron of the hostel, Zarina, speaks English, and was, therefore, able to help me with the translation and to discuss culturally specific knowledge. I also wanted to be in a village where there was at least one girls' school.

As I wanted to find Ismaili and Sunni women's perspectives on schooling, before my arrival to the research site, I had anticipated working in two villages, one predominantly Ismaili and the other predominantly Sunni. However, as members from both these religious groups live in Booni, I focused on the experiences of women from this valley only. This proved to be favorable as it took into account problems of distance due to the challenging terrain. It was not easy for Zarina to travel far from the village, and even the hostel, because of her committments to the hostel and her family. Furthermore, we did not have easy access to a jeep. In this culture where women's space is limited to the household realm, to school and, for some, to the place of employment, it was also difficult for Zarina and I to travel alone. Even while walking through the village we had to be accompanied by a man, usually a hostel staff member. Religious tensions between Ismailis and Sunnis in Chitral District also made it unwise for Zarina and I, who are both Ismailis, to travel alone, particularly in Sunni dominated areas of the district.

"Beginning Relationships"

Like Haig-Brown (1992: 97), I prefer "to think of the start of research in which I participate with other human beings as beginning a relationship" rather than as "gaining access" (Berg, 1989) to the study setting. I also recognize that my work can

begin only when the participant accepts me as a "worthwhile confidante" (Haig-Brown, 1992: 97).

My relationships, and consequently, my work began when I contacted the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKES, P) in the fall of 1993. I explained my research project to the staff and they expressed their willingness to support my study. They were encouraged because this would be the first study conducted in the area where the women themselves would get the opportunity to speak about their perspectives on as well as their experiences of schooling.

"Beginning Relationships" With My Research Collaborator

As an "outsider" to the Chitrali culture, I explained to the staff of AKES, P (Chitral) that I would need to seek the assistance of a research collaborator to begin relationships with the local women (Lightning, 1992). Thus, upon arrival at the field they helped me to establish one of the most important relationships during my study, the relationship with my research collaborator and friend, Zarina.

Zarina is one of the first Chitrali women to have had the opportunity to go to school and to leave the valley for higher education. She is currently working toward a degree in education. Zarina is very involved in women's issues in Chitral and is dedicated to the work she is doing for her people. Zarina introduced me to most of the participants in the study as well as to many local people in the community who contributed valuable information to the research. She also provided me with useful information for establishing rapport with the people (Dobbert, 1982). She was my main resource on women's activities, women's schooling, women's employment, social networkings and family geneology. Zarina also helped me to verify and to understand culturally specific data. She gave me a perspective which made it easier for me to understand her culture and the information which the local people shared with me. Zarina and I also developed a special friendship, and her support was important and valuable for me in adapting and feeling comfortable in this culture.

"Beginning Relationships" With the Women

I had initially proposed to interview a sample of about six to eight women with various backgrounds of schooling experiences. Once in the field, I increased the sample to 27 women as I wanted the women to represent different perspectives based on age, employment, religion and levels of schooling.

The process of building relationships with the Ismaili women in the sample was done with the help of Zarina. I explained to Zarina the criteria I was looking for in my

sample. The first step was to contact women who had confidence to express themselves verbally and who were willing to share their experiences with me. I told Zarina that I wanted these women to represent certain age, employment and schooling experiences and that they should represent perspectives of Ismaili and Sunni women.

Being an Ismaili, it was easy for Zarina to help me build relationships with Ismaili women. She identified some Ismaili women with whom I could speak. The hostel staff members also helped me to identify a few women, mainly Ismailis. As Ismailis, it was harder for Zarina and the hostel staff members to identify Sunni women in the community. Nonetheless, Zarina was able to locate some Sunni women because of her work in the community, and through their contacts, some of the hostel staff members were also able to identify some women from this religious group. Zarina and I located one of the Sunni women in the sample through a contact we established while walking through the village on our way to the hostel from one of the homes.

The relationships which were built with most of the Sunni women in the sample were done with the help of Taher *bhai*[6], a key person in the community. Taher *bhai*, who is a close friend of Zarina, is a very respected individual in the community and has good relationships with most of the people. Zarina and I explained the criteria for my sample to him. Taher *bhai* accompanied Zarina and myself to the Sunni homes which he identified for us. He would explain the nature of my study and my purpose of speaking with the women to the household women and men; he would also request permission from the women and their fathers or husbands for me to conduct the interviews. During the interviews, however, Taher *bhai* and other male members of the household were not present as I sensed that the women were not comfortable to speak with men around.

At the beginning of each interview, I explained my presence in Booni Valley to the women. In many instances, the women had already made assumptions about my presence. They thought I was involved with an aid agency and had come to give them financial or educational assistance. However, I told them that I was a student from Canada and that I had come to speak with the women about their schooling, work and life experiences for my thesis. Most of the women, particularly those with no schooling, found it difficult to understand the concept of a thesis so I told them I was going to write a book based on their experiences. Many of these women thought that they could not contribute anything to my project because they have never been to school. I would tell them that their life experiences and their contributions to their

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[6]*Bhai* means brother and is used as a form of respect.

families and communities are of great value, and that their insights would be important to my project. At the end of each interview I also asked the women if they would like to learn anything about my life experiences and most of them usually asked me questions about my family.

Overall, I contacted more than 27 women in Booni because a number of women did not wish to participate in the study. It was mainly amongst the Sunnis that I encountered challenges connecting with the women. I think that a big part of this was due to religious tensions within the community between the Ismailis and Sunnis. As Zarina and I are both Ismaili, the Sunni women probably felt hesitant and suspicious of my presence. There was a rumor in one of the Sunni dominated hamlets that I was a newspaper reporter. In one instance, I had to reassure one woman during a follow-up session that I was not a newspaper reporter and that the work I was doing was for the women. I explained to her that all the information she shared with me would be treated confidentially and that anonymity would be assured. I also informed her that the consent form which I requested each woman to sign and which she had signed during our first meeting, was to protect her. Furthermore, I told her that if she did not want me to use what she had shared with me, I would respect her wish.

A second factor which I feel might have made it difficult to build relationships with Sunni women is the practice of *purdah* which appeared to be observed more strictly by the Sunni women than Ismaili women.[7] I felt it was easier to build relationships and to speak with Ismaili women as they tend to be more liberal and relaxed about *purdah*.

A summarized description of the age, marital status, schooling and work experiences of the women who participated in this study is presented in Table 3-1. Women in Booni Valley who work in the formal sector are mainly in the health care and education professions or in the women's organizations of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme and the Chitral Area Development Project. A few women are also employed in the service sector at a non-professional level. This description also indicates whether these women belong to high, middle or low castes. The exact caste name has not been given as this is a sensitive subject. In some instances it was not possible to find out the caste to which a woman belonged; a "--" has been used to show this.

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[7]See Chapter V "Description of Research Site: Booni Valley" for the practice of *purdah* amongst Shia Ismailis and Sunni Muslim women in Booni Valley.

Table 3-1

Social Characteristics of the Participants: Keeping the Names[8] Straight

Name	Age Group	Marital Status[a]	School[b]	Work[c]	Religion[d]	Caste[e]
Fatima	45 - 55	M	None	Hhld & agric labour	S. I.	H
Ashraf	45 - 55	W	None	Service Sector	S. I.	L
Sultana	45 - 55	W	None	Hhld & agric labour	S	L
Mariam	45 - 55	M	None	Hhld & agric labour	S	–
Azada	35 - 45	M	B. Sch. T. Prep.	Service Sector	S. I.	H
Bibi Rah	35 - 45	M	B. Sch.	Hhld & agric labour	S. I.	L
Shora	35 - 45	M	None	Hhld & agric labour	S. I.	L
Azza	35 - 45	M	None	Hhld & agric labour	S	H
Sakeena	35 - 45	M	None	Hhld & agric labour	S	L
Gulshan	20 - 34	M	G. Sch.	Hhld & agric labour	S. I.	H
Aisha	20 - 34	M	G. Sch.	Hhld & agric labour	S	L
Naseema	20 - 34	M	None	Hhld & agric labour	S	M
Khatun	20 - 34	M	None	Hhld & agric labour	S. I	M
Roshan	20 - 34	M	G. Sch. T. Prep.	Service Sector	S. I.	–
Mehnaz	20 - 34	M	B. Sch. Dist. Ed.	Service Sector	S	H
Shabnum	20 - 34	S	G. Sch. Health care Training	Service Sector	S. I.	H
Rubina	20 - 34	S	G. Sch.	Service Sector	S	M
Shahnaz	20 - 34	S	G. Sch. Dist. Ed.	Hhld & agric labour	S	M - L
Rabia	20 - 34	S	G. Sch. Dist. Ed.	Hhld & agric labour	S. I.	L
Zeinab	20 - 34	S	NFE (adult classes)	Hhld & agric labour	S	–
Yasmin	15 - 19	S	G. Sch.	Completing *Matric.*	S. I.	H
Umah	15 - 19	S	G. Sch.	Completing *Matric.*	S. I.	M - L
Zubeda	15 - 19	S	G. Sch.	Completing *Matric.*	S. I.	H
Sahebjhan	15 - 19	M	G. Sch.	Completing *Matric.*	S. I.	M
Nilufer	15 - 19	S	G. Sch.	Completing *Matric.*	S	H
Sameera	15 - 19	S	G. Sch.	Completing *Matric.*	S	H
Basra	15 - 19	S	G. Sch.	Beginning Dist. Ed./Hhld & agric labour	S	H

[a]M = married, W = widowed, S = single; [b]B. Sch. = Boys' School, Teacher Prep. = Teacher Preparation (Training), G. Sch. = Girls' School, Dist. Ed. = Distance Education, NFE = Nonformal Education; [c]*Matric.* = matriculation, Hhld and agric labour = Household and agricultural labour; [d]S = Sunni, S.I. = Shia Ismaili; [e] H = High, M = Middle, L = Low, -- = not known

[8]Pseudonyms have been used for the women's names. Pseudonyms have been used to refer to local people appearing throughout the text. My mother's name (which appears later in this chapter under "Interviews and Conversations") is the only name which has not been changed.

Research Methods

The choice of research methods is directly guided by the nature of the problem one wants to address. As my study was to understand the meaning of schooling and work in the lives of women in Booni Valley in Northern Pakistan, I chose ethnographic research methods. I thought that ethnography is appropriate for conducting cross-cultural research as the principle objective of ethnographic research is to provide a natural description of the cultural group being studied (Haig-Brown, 1992: 105). Furthermore, ethnography allowed me the opportunity to learn from the people themselves about their culture; to try to understand the "inside" perspective of the cultural group I had chosen to study; to record how these people behave and how they explain their behaviour; to make explicit the cultural knowledge that is implicitly understood by those native to the study situation (Spindler and Spindler, 1987; Spradley, 1979; Wax, 1971; Wolcott, 1987).

During my study, I used multi-modal collecting techniques such as participant observation, interviews and the collection of other written and non written sources in the field. I used a number of data collecting techinques as this provides the basis for triangulation whereby information is obtained in many ways rather than relying solely on one technique (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). I also cross-checked the data to prevent myself from accepting too quickly the validity of initial impressions (Lather, 1986; Wolcott, 1988). This allowed me to enhance the scope, density and clarity of constructs which I developed during the research process (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). It also helped me to correct the influence of my subjectivity and bias on the data as a researcher (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984). Thus, I participated in the people's daily lives for an extended period of time "watching, listening, asking questions, formulating hypotheses...[so that I could] acquire some sense of the social structure of the setting and begin to understand the culture of the participants" (Hammersley and Atkinson: 1983: 89). In order for me to get and to verify information through a variety of techniques, I had to become the "essential research tool" in my study (Wolcott 1975: 115).

Participant Observation

While in the field, I used participant observation as a technique for collecting data. According to Spradley (1980), participant observers engage in activities appropriate to the social situation and observe the activities, the people and the physical aspects of the social situation. Wolcott (1988 in Farah, 1992: 22) observes, "I think it

is fair to ask anyone who claims title as a participant observer to provide a fuller expression about how each facet - participant, observer, and the precarious nexus between them - is to be played out in an actual research setting."

During the first few weeks in the research site, I was primarily an observer of village life. I wanted to observe and try to understand the community in a cultural context. My main form of participation in the community was in eating, in living and in visiting people in the community. I spent a lot of time observing daily routines at the hostel as well as interactions between Zarina and her children. When I visited the different schools in the village, I also had a chance to observe some of the classroom situations as well as other activities at the school.

It took me a few weeks to become comfortable visiting homes and walking in the village. Although I took on the status of sister of the hostel girls and Zarina right from the beginning of my stay, it also took a few weeks before we were all comfortable with each other. Once rapport had been established, the hostel girls began to confide in me and to share their schooling experiences with me. They also talked about their homes and how they felt living so far away from their families. I felt that the girls connected with me for three main reasons: 1) we shared a common gender; 2) we shared a common religion; 3) like them, I was a young woman living far away from her family. Zarina also shared her life experiences with me. I began to participate in some activities at the hostel like cleaning the grain with Zarina and some of the girls. I found myself having to guard against becoming involved in gossip or taking sides which sometimes meant being careful not to express opinions. I felt that I had to be particularly careful during discussions about religion, a sensitive topic in the district, or when hostel girls had any conflicts with one another.

I discovered that it was not always easy to maintain a balance between participant and observer (Farah, 1992). It was essential to become an active participant to create a rapport with the local people so that they would allow me to observe, listen to and experiences parts of their culture. However, this involved a lot of time and energy which made it difficult at times to find time to write. I did manage to write brief notes after observing or participating in a particular situation and then elaborated on them when I had time and privacy for reflecting (Farah, 1992).

Conversations and Informal Interviews

In addition to the unstructured interviews, I also gathered data from conversations with the local people, including the hostel girls, Zarina and other hostel staff members. These conversations focused on topics like school, women's work, men's work, family relationships, employment, and religion. For example, the topic of school and women's life and family experiences would often come up during my conversations with the hostel girls. They were awed by my schooling opportunities, my work and the fact that I was a single woman living so far away from her family. This led to them telling me about their schooling opportunities and their experiences as girls living away from home in a community where this is not a common occurence. Conversations with male staff allowed me to explore some male perspectives on schooling and life in Chitral.

I had some conversations that turned out to be informal interviews with key people[9] in the community, such as headmistresses, headmasters, principals at the local schools, hostel staff, elders, religious guides, as well as the staff and administration of organizations including the Aga Khan Education Service, the Aga Khan Health Service, the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme and the Chitral Area Development Project. These informal interviews and conversations were important in providing information about family structure, daily routines and division of labour, types of social networks in the community, the history of the area, schooling, the economy, religion and various development initiatives taking place in Chitral. They proved to be crucial to my understanding of where schooling fits in the context of the women's lives.

The Ethnographic Interview

In my study, the unstructured ethnographic interview was used to gather descriptive data using the women's own words to help me develop insights about their perceptions and interpretations of some piece of their world (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Dobbert, 1982: Spradley, 1979). The interviews were open-ended with some stated structure and purpose. For me, it was a process of the women telling me their stories and directing me in mutual exploration (Wolcott, 1987).

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[9]Spradley (1979) has defined these people as "key informants."

Unstructured interviews

During the unstructured interviews, I employed exploratory research methods using what Spradley (1979: 60) calls "descriptive questions"[10] to find out how local women perceive schooling in their lives. These initial questions were prepared to answer my research problem and were modified once I was in the field on the basis of observation and conversations with local people. To maintain the flow of the "stories," I did not always ask the questions in the order that they appear on the interview schedule.[11]

I began conducting the interviews using a tape recorder one week after my arrival to the village and continued to conduct them over a period of 10 weeks with Zarina. Of the 27 interviews, nearly all were conducted using both English and the local language, Khowar. I asked the questions in English and Zarina translated them in Khowar. Zarina then translated the women's responses in English. Six interviews were conducted in Pakistan's two official languages, English and Urdu, with women and girls who have been or are currently going to school. These six interviews were translated by my mother, Harcharan Parchan, who speaks Urdu, using the same procedure as those interviews conducted in English and Khowar. I also conducted one focus group with three school-going girls. I began conducting this interview in Urdu with the help of my mother. However, because the girls felt uncomfortable expressing themselves in Urdu, we changed to the local language and Zarina translated.[12]

Each individual interview lasted one to two hours. The length of the interviews was due in large part to the translation process and to uncontrollable factors like interruptions and "personal" discussions between the translator and the participants during the interviews. The interviews were conducted either in the participants' homes or at my residence, the hostel. Of the total 27 interviews, nine were conducted at the hostel.

In order to strengthen the credibility of the data, I transcribed the data after each interview and conducted follow-up interviews with the women to fill in gaps or to clarify information from the initial interviews. Lather (1986) refers to this as "face validity" and it is established by recycling categories and emerging theories back through at least a subsample of the participants (Hampton, 1993; Lather, 1986). I often

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[10]"Descriptive questions" are intended to allow the informants to provide a broad description of their experiences.

[11]See Appendix A and Appendix B for interview questions.

[12]The hesitation and groping for words indicated to me that these girls are not fluent in Urdu and hence this could be a reason many of them face language difficulties when they go to the "down district" for further studies. This topic will be further elaborated in Chapter VI "Women's Perceptions of Schooling".

checked culturally specific data with Zarina. She would also tell me about family geneologies as well as talk about village history which helped in interpreting the data.

Translating Interviews

Before leaving for the research site, I realized that language which plays a profoundly important role for constructing reality in ethnographic research (Spradley, 1979) might be a limitation. Being somewhat familiar with Urdu before arriving in the field, it was easy for me to learn enough of this language that I spoke it on a regular basis with the girls and hostel staff. It was not possible for me to speak with most of the local women in Urdu as they only spoke Khowar. Urdu is spoken and understood primarily by those people with schooling as Urdu is the medium of instruction at schools. I relied on my mother's assistance to conduct the unstructured interviews in Urdu as I did not feel confidant enough of my knowledge of the language to conduct them alone.

As I was only able to be in the research site for about three months, it was not long enough for me to also learn the local language, Khowar. It was often frustrating not being able to speak and understand Khowar. I realized that a lot of valuable cultural knowledge transmitted simply through 'everyday' conversations was being lost. Moreover, I was aware that I was unable to understand the "cognitive maps" (Dobbert, 1982: 130) of the women as they were being lost during the translation process, particularly when the women spoke at length to certain questions. It was difficult at times for Zarina to remember everything or to remember it in the order spoken by the women. Although she tried to be as accurate as possible, it was not always easy for Zarina to translate meanings and concepts particular to Khowar into English. Hence, I not only had to be careful of my own subjective interpretation of language meanings and concepts, but also of the translator's subjectivity (Spradley, 1979). I also had to be careful to word questions in a way that when translated, had meaning for the women. For example, when asking women about their age, I would try to estimate their ages by first asking questions about whether they got married before or after menstruation (I was told that Chitrali women begin to menstruate usually at the age of 14 or 15), how long after marriage they had their first child and approximately how old their children are now (this was sometimes estimated according to the class in which their children were).

In retrospect, if I had had more time, I would have tried to learn the local language. However, I feel I was able to learn enough of the local language to sense where translator subjectivity might be coming into play and to pick up on any data

which I thought might not have been translated. In order to validate the accuracy of translation, I checked two interviews that were conducted during my first week in Booni Valley with a second source. As mentioned earlier, I also conducted follow-up interviews and checked culturally specific data with my research collaborator.

Choice of a Female Translator

Given the nature of my study and the Chitrali culture, I felt it necessary and important to have a female translator. While I was in Booni there were only four women who spoke English well enough to function as translators. These women are either teachers in the community or are in some way associated with educational institutions. However, due to their personal work committments it was convenient to rely primarily on one local woman as a translator, a key resource person and a research collaborator, Zarina. As indicated earlier, my mother also helped me to translate interviews with girls who are currently going to school. I did not feel that these participants would be able to talk comfortably or freely with their "teachers" as translators.

Recording Unstructured Interviews

I had anticipated tape recording as many of the unstructured interviews as possible. However, I did not want to record the conversations as they were personal and open, and I did not want the women to feel threatened and inhibited from speaking by the tape recorder. I felt that the presence of my tape recorder might jeopardize the relationship of friendship and trust that I wanted to establish with them. On some occasions, I did record the informal interviews with the consent of the participants.

Before recording the unstructured interviews, I sought consent from the women. All of the interviews conducted with Ismaili women except one were taped. This participant did not feel comfortable having her voice recorded. Only five of the interviews conducted with Sunni women were recorded. Most of the Sunni women had to request permission from their husbands or fathers who generally refused. The interviews which were not taped were hand written during the interview and permission was also requested from the participants to do this. I assured the women anonymity and confidentiality of the information they shared with me. I also explained that the tapes would be erased after the project was completed. In compliance with the ethical guidelines established by the University of Alberta, all the participants were asked to sign a consent form.

Recording Data from Conversations, Informal Interviews and Participant Observation

I recorded observation, informal interview and conversation data in a journal. Although I often carried pen and paper wherever I went, entries into my journal were usually made at the end of each day or immediately after the conversation or observation took place. As with the tape recorder, at times I felt that these writing instruments might inhibit the women; recording was done later at the hostel. Furthermore, I found that in some instances recording information during the conversations disrupted the flow.[13]

The tape recorded unstructured interviews were transcribed directly on to my computer after each interview. I also entered full versions of the hand-written interviews on the computer. I transcribed the follow-up interviews in Karachi upon returning from the field.

Secondary Data Sources

I also collected information from secondary data sources provided primarily by the Aga Khan Education Service, the Aga Khan Health Service, the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, the Chitral Area Development Project and from a local teacher in the community. These data provide statistical and background information on areas of education, health and development projects, as well as on the geography and history of the area. It was difficult to locate secondary data from government institutions as updated records are not kept or filed. Much of their stastical data is not current, is primarily estimated data and is inconsistent.

Analysis

As data analysis is not a distinct stage of the research sequence in ethnography, I began some preliminary data analysis while I was in the field to look for common cultural themes and to allow some hypotheses to emerge during the course of the study (Lather, 1986; Spindler and Spindler, 1987). Some culturally specific questions arose from this process which I added to the interview schedule. This analysis also allowed me to see if there were any areas where I needed to do to further observation or further questionning.

I did not interpret much of the fieldnote data while in the research site. Although it may have been useful to do this, time constraints and the amount of data

[13]I also sought permission from the participants if I was writing anything in their presence.

recorded made it difficult to make detailed interpretations while at the research site (Farah, 1992).

Upon returning from the field, I continued with the data analysis. I used Spradley's "domain analysis." According to Spradley (1979: 100), "[a]ny symbolic category that includes other categories is called a domain....Domains are the first and most important unit of analysis in ethnographic research." Through this step, the ethnographer can find a doorway into the system of meaning of another culture (Spradley, 1979). Semantic relationships provide the ethnographer with one of the best clues to the structure of meaning in another culture. They lead directly to the larger categories (folk domains) that reveal the organization of cultural knowledge learned by informants (Spradley, 1979: 112).

After completing the domain analysis, I began looking for cultural themes which Spradley (1979: 186) defines as any "cognitive principle, tacit or explicit, recurrent in a number of domains and serving as a relationship among subsystems of cultural meaning." Cultural themes are elements in the patterns which make up a culture. The next process was connecting the themes with the theory.

Data Validation and the Role of the Ethnographer

The ethnographer's role in the research process has been described as a "human filter" (Khleif, 1974: 389) through which all the data from the unfamiliar setting are screened. Thus, my personal involvement in the research has added another dimension whereby my own experience and reactions are likely to form part of the ethnographic account. As the existence of "value-neutral" (Lather, 1986) research has been denied, the best I can achieve is a position of "objective subjectivity" (Lather, 1986: 78). Being a middle-class woman brought up primarily in the western world, I admit to a limited knowledge of the culture and perceptions of the women in Booni Valley. Hence, I acknowledge the subjectivity in this work where my viewpoint and influence have obviously become part of the paper as information has been "filtered" (Khleif, 1974: 389) through my western feminist mind. I also acknowledge that although I "can never come to a full understanding of another's experience, [I] must try" (Haig-Brown, 1992: 98).

Research as "Border Work"

The most challenging experience for me was dealing with my identity and explaining my identity to the local people. Being an independent woman brought up in the middle-class western world, but sharing some common cultural and religious characteristics with Pakistanis, I often felt as though I was a "border worker" (Haig-Brown, 1992: 97). I felt a lot of tension in terms of the way I felt I was expected to behave and the way I should normally behave. For example, I was told that it was ok[illegible]r me to walk around in the village [illegible]mething not generally done by women - because I was a 'foreigner'. However, because of my physical characteristics and my religion, I felt that I had to be extra sensitive. I also had to take into consideration that it was not easy for Zarina to move about freely in the village.

I did not always observe physical *purdah* by covering my head, particularly in Ismaili homes or hamlets of Booni. I wanted to maintain some sense of being an 'outsider' for the purpose of my research. I often took my cues on how to behave by watching Zarina; for example, when she covered her head, I also did so; when she left her head uncovered, so did I.

Being an independent woman living in a culture where women's space is relatively restricted, it was not easy to get used to being accompanied by a male while walking through the village or while travelling by jeep. Not being able to communicate freely with the people because of language barriers also made me feel like a "border worker." I remember sitting in some interviews and feeling as though this project was Zarina's and not mine.

However, as I try to make sense of the purpose of my study and what I had anticipated accomplishing out of it, I recognize that being a woman who shares a common religion with most of the inhabitants of Chitral made it possible for me to interact with and share in the women's lives. This, I feel has made a difference in acquiring a deeper understanding and being able to accurately reflect the women's lives. Furthermore, as an "outsider" I was able to participate in some of the men's realities like sitting with them in their homes. In the Chitrali culture, the men usually sit with the "guests" in a certain part of the home which is reserved mainly for guests, and the women remain in the kitchen where they prepare a meal or some tea. Because of this cultural practice, there were times when I even had to insist that I could sit with the women in the kitchen. I was also able to speak with the men while travelling with them. I had the opportunity of interacting with male staff members at the hostel as well. I remember talking with a white male teacher from the United States who told me

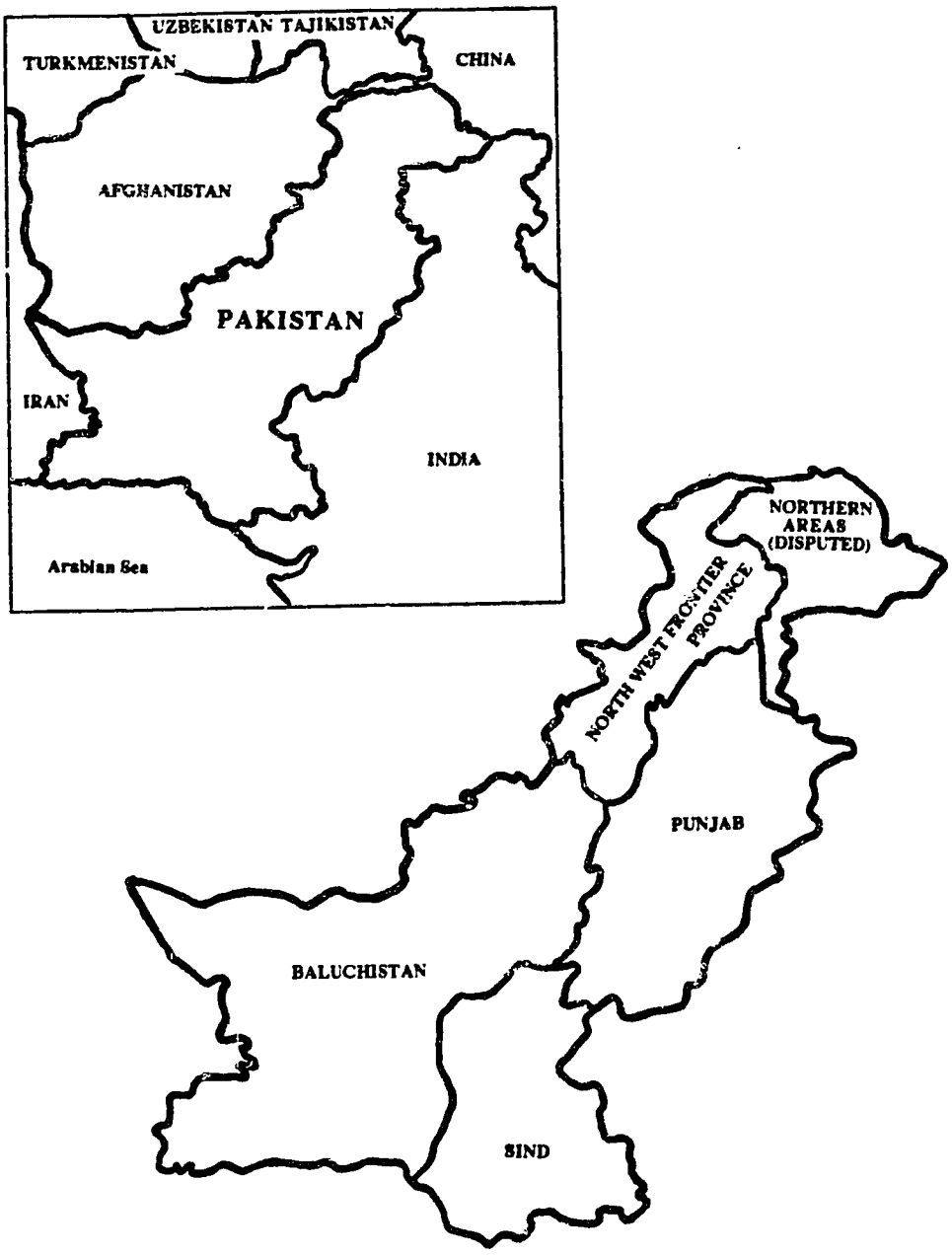
how restricted he was in terms of interacting with the women. I thought to myself how lucky I am to have had the opportunity not only to get some sense of the women's realities, but also not to have been totally excluded from participating in the men's realities.

CHAPTER IV

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF PAKISTAN AND CHITRAL DISTRICT

Maps 4-1 & 4-2

Pakistan's Geographic Position and Pakistan's Four Provinces



Adapted from: Bignold, Wendy. (1994). Education Provision and Access for Girls in Chitral Valley, Pakistan. Masters Thesis. University of Reading.

Pakistan in a Regional Context

Pakistan is centreed on some of the oldest civilizations in the world along the Indus valley, but the contemporary state was created along with India in the Partition Act of 1947 and the separation of East Pakistan as Bangladesh in 1970. Its borders are not yet stable, as it contests control of north-eastern areas with India, but it now covers an area of 800,000 square kilometres with a 1988 estimated population of 100 million people. Pakistan has a variety of physical features including mountains, deserts, plateaux and a lengthy coastline. The country shares borders with India, Iran, Afghanistan and China. Administratively, Pakistan is divided into four provinces, Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and North West Frontier Province. Additional regions in this country include the state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA) and the Federal area around Islamabad, the national capital. Maps 4-1 and 4-2 illustrate Pakistan's geographic position and its four provinces. There are six major cities, with Karachi in the south the largest urban area and Islamabad and its twin Rawalpindi the second largest urban area, dozens of towns such as Gilgit and Chitral town in Northern Pakistan and over 4000 village communities scattered throughout the country.

The national language and the language of government is Urdu with English specified as a second official language. Within the provinces local vernaculars contest for dominance: Sindi in Sindh; Punjabi in Punjab; Pushto in the North West Frontier Province. There are also many other languages spoken at the village level. Arabic is not spoken or used in daily social intercourse, but is taught in the schools (British Consultants' Report, 1988: 15).

History of Education in Pakistan

The key to understanding any aspect of Pakistan such as its culture, politics, government, law or education, lies in two things: Pakistan's colonial past and the religious basis of its creation (Farah, 1992: 40). Pakistan's colonial past and its religious history were shared with India, and this history is the history of the Indian subcontinent including to a greater or lesser degree all of the countries of South Asia. After Pakistan achieved independence from British India, there was a large migration between the two countries; Muslims migrated from present day India to what is now Pakistan and Hindus migrated from present day Pakistan to what is now India. The majority of the population in Pakistan today is Muslim with a small minority of other religious groups.

The Pre-Colonial Period

Many of the Muslim rulers during the pre-Moghul and Moghul period were great patrons of learning. During Muslim rule in India (1526-1858), Muslim men received education through the *maktab* (primary school) attached to the mosques where *Quranic* education, Persian, Arabic and elementary math were taught. They also received education through the *madrasa* (middle/high school) where the *Holy Quran, hadiths* -- sayings of Prophet Muhammed (P.B.U.H) --, philosophy, *Shariah* (Islamic law), Arabic and Persian literature, and medicine were taught (Farah, 1992). At these institutions, the translation of Sanskrit into Arabic andPersian, as well as the development of local languages, Urdu and Hindi, were encouraged. Muslim rulers had a "liberal policy" (Merchant, 1992: 98) in imparting education to the local men. It was important and necessary for men and women to learn the *Holy Quran* for *kiyamat* - the day of judgement.

With the exception of *Quranic* education, secular education for women was not perceived to be important. Only a few girls from elite families received some basic formal education which they learned at home primarily through rote learning. Socio-cultural traditions made it difficult for women to go out and attend *maktabs* and *madrasas*, as their place was recognized primarily in the household . Nabi (1991) considers it ironic that most girls were excluded from secular education since Prophet Muhammed (P.B.U.H) stressed that it is the duty of all Muslims to acquire knowledge. During the time of Prophet Muhammed (P.B.U.H), Muslim women had a high status and participated in many privileged and honored positions in society.

The Colonial Period

Beginning around 1858, support for indigenous institutions was stopped and the *maktabs* and *madrasas* were neglected with the establishment of British rule in what is now Pakistan. In 1884, the British felt a need to make educational reforms in India. This education was not one that was meant for the development of all local people. The British wanted an education to train local men in western language and thought, and to produce a local elite to take over clerical administrative jobs (Farah, 1992; Merchant, 1992). The patriarchal class system introduced by the British did not consider women as suitable candidates for such positions. Merchant writes, "[the] calculated attitude towards female education by the British Government and Christian missionaries, combined with Victorian-style prejudices against employment of women, deprived most women...from receiving even the rudiments of formal education" (1992: 100).

Patriarchal relationships introduced by the colonialists, plus patriarchy during the pre-colonial period prevented local Muslim women from participating in formal education.

For all Muslims, however, two consequences resulted from the British rule. Firstly, the Muslim system of education deteriorated due to negative attitudes by the British towards Muslim education and to the suspension of aid to mosque schools (*maktabs* and *madrasas*). Secondly, the role and function of the religious schools and government sponsored schools became specific and diverse (Farah, 1992; Hayes, 1987). Whereas the *maktabs* and *madrasas* prepared men for both religious and secular life during the Moghul rule, they were now only relevant to religion. Many Indian Muslim men did not participate in the modernization and in the secular western schooling as they saw it as anti-Islamic and going against their culture and traditions.

The Post-Colonial Period

The new independent nation of Pakistan was not politically or educationally strong. The country received few schools with the partition, and only three of the twenty - one universities of undivided India came to Pakistan; two of these three universities went to West Pakistan (current Pakistan) and one to East Pakistan (current Bangladesh) (Hayes, 1987).

Although the Education Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Fazal-ur-Rahaman, declared the need to reorient the entire education policy "to correspond closely to the need of the time and to reflect the ideals for which Pakistan as an Islamic state stands" (Qureshi, 1975 in Merchant, 1992: 100), from 1948 to 1959, no systematic aims of education were established. The departure of expatriates resulted in a need to train locals to take up positions as office workers and civil servants. Thus the education system continued to function as it had under British rule.

The 1972-80 education policy, however, aimed at universalizing primary education to eradicate illiteracy[14]. The policy also introduced changes such as providing free education up to class eight, increasing the proportion of female teachers, revising the curricula and textbooks and establishing in-service teacher training programs throughout Pakistan (Merchant, 1992: 100-1). However, female education was not given priority. The practice of *purdah* meant that many people desired separate schools for girls which were too expensive for the government. Furthermore, the general attitude towards women's education was not positive because of traditions restricting women primarily to the household.

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[14]"Illiteracy" in the sense of not having any reading and writing skills.

Women's education and development in Pakistan received some recognition and priority in 1979, four years after the United Nations Women's Year in 1975. The United Nations declared that successful social development planning necessitated providing educational opportunities for women. Pakistan's National Education Policy Document recognizes that "the society at large can only reap fruits of its efforts to the extent it has invested in the education of its females" (Pakistan Ministry of Education, 1979: 20). Pakistan's Seventh Five Year Plan 1988-93 set priorities to integrate women into the development process through the provision of full equality of opportunity in education, health, employment and all spheres of national life (Merchant, 1992: 102).

Improvements have been made in the position of women and they have gained access to education at all levels (Kelly, 1984). Nonetheless, equal opportunities in education are still not evident in Pakistan, and this is particularly so for women living in rural areas. Furthermore, the survival rate of girls in school as well as gender differences in field, content and economic outcomes still prevail throughout the country (Ghafoor, 1982; Merchant, 1992).

Profile of Women in Rural Pakistan

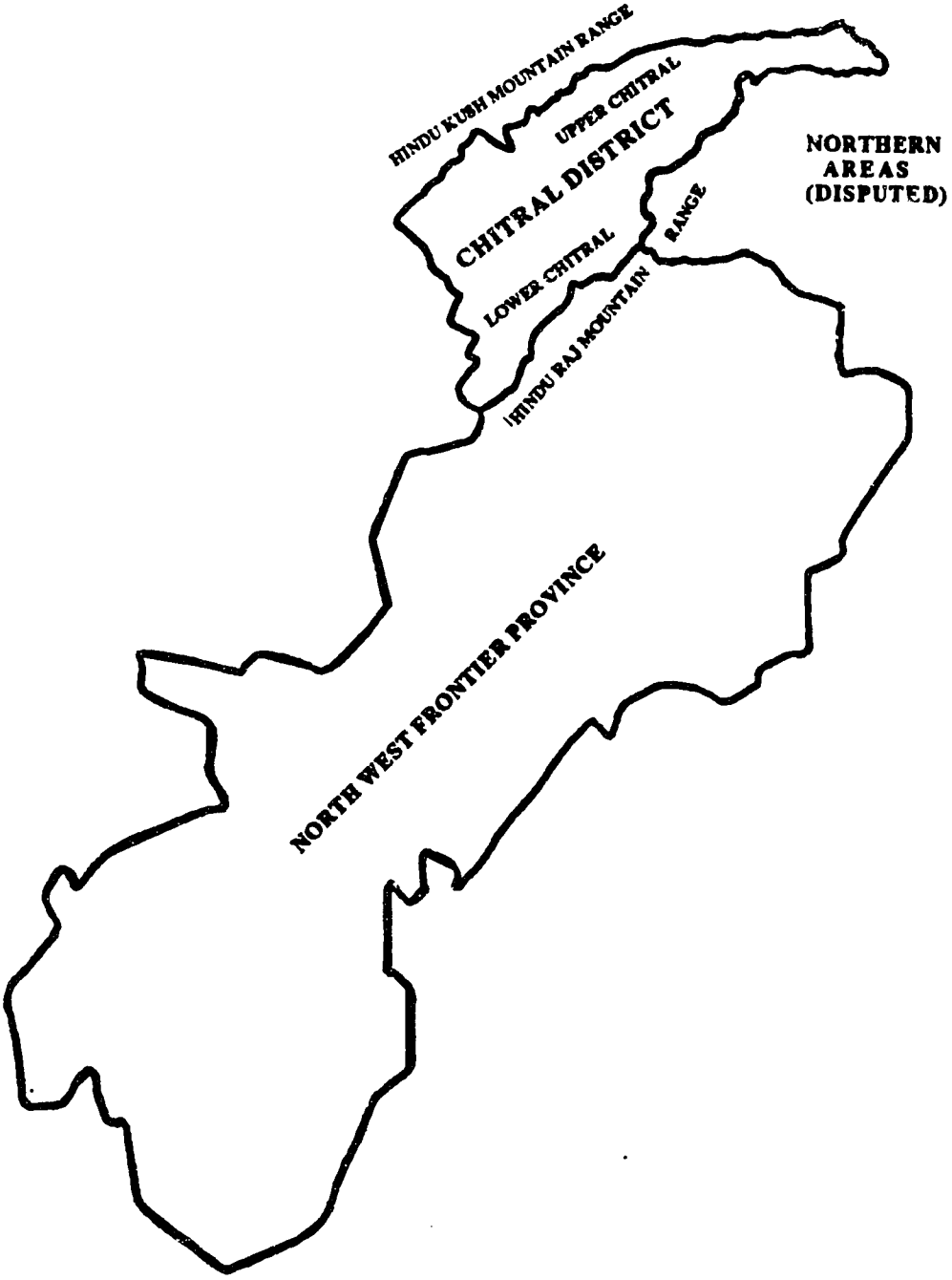
In 1985, of the total population of 48 million women in Pakistan, 73% lived in the rural areas. An increasing proportion of women in rural areas is maintained as the overall population rises. These women provide a major source of labour for the rural economy. They are heavily involved in reproductive and productive roles often working 14 - 16 hours a day. The average age of marriage in Pakistan is 16.5. Pakistani women bear an average of seven children, and their peak fertility occurs between the ages of 20 and 24 (Mumtaz and Shaheed, c. 1985; Shah, 1986). Mumtaz and Shaheed (c. 1985: 1) note that many "women die in childbirth each year because of closely spaced pregnancies, unhygienic conditions in childbirth, long periods of lactation, poor nutrition, and a lack of pre and post natal care." The 1989 Statistical Profile by the Pakistani Minister of Education revealed that rural girls are three times less likely to attend primary school than boys, and that this figure is not expected to change much by the year 2000. The drop out rate is very high, and consequently, the retention rate of girls is very low. One out of every 13 girls in village primary schools continues to enrol in middle school. In 1986, the literacy rate of women living in rural areas was 6% (Shah, 1986).

My research area, Chitral District in Northern Pakistan, represents a region where women's schooling has not received much recognition by the government.

Chitral is a rural area characteristic of the areas where women have continued to be most disadvantaged in their participation in schooling. Because of this "disadvantage" it is an ideal area for my research, which looks at the way that schooling is being understood, interpreted and incorporated into women's lives.

Map 4-3

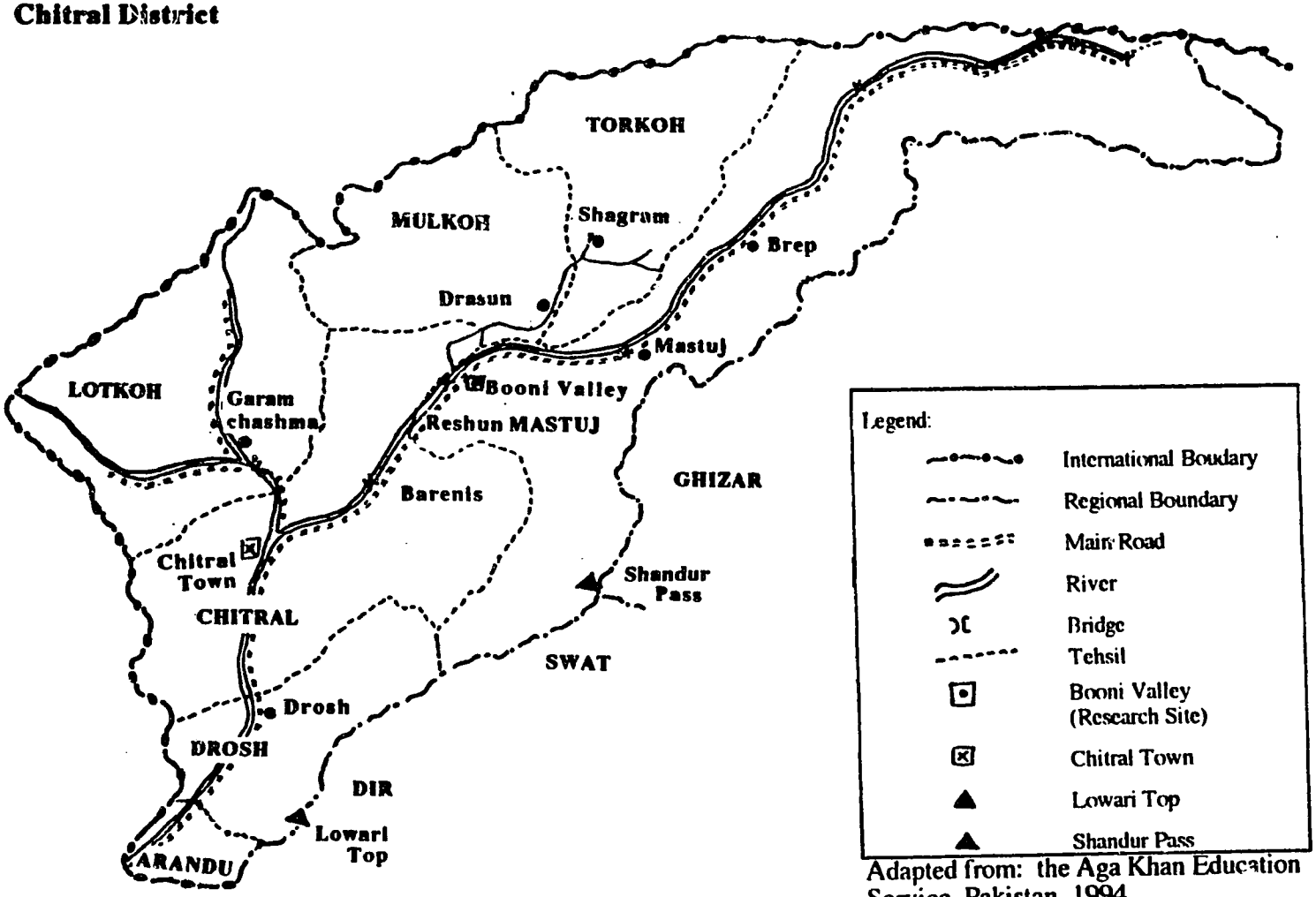
Postion of Chitral District in the North West Frontier Province



Adapted from: Bignold, Wendy. (1994). Education Provision and Access for Girls in Chitral Valley, Pakistan. Masters Thesis. University of Reading.

Map 4-4

Chitral District



Adapted from: the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan, 1994

Chitral District in a Regional Context

Geography and Topography

Chitral District, located in the extreme north west corner of Pakistan, is the northernmost district of the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. The Hindu Kush Range divides it from Afghanistan and Tajikistan on the west and north, and the lower Hindu Raj Mountains separate it from the rest of Pakistan on the east and south (Shaw in Bignold, 1994). The district is 14, 850 sq. km. and 300 km long with elevations from 1060 - 7778 metres (Baig, 1994; PTDC, 1985). Chitral District is divided into two administrative sub-divisions or "tehsils": Lower Chitral (Chitral) is about 6, 350 sq. km. and Upper Chitral (Mastuj) is about 8, 500 sq. km. Chitral town, located in Lower Chitral, is the seat of administration and the district headquarters. Booni Valley, located in Upper Chitral, is the sub-division headquarter of Upper Chitral. (See Maps 4-1 and 4-2, Map 4-3 and Map 4-4)

The terrain is characterized by rugged, barren mountains which are penetrated by rivers, streams and steep- sided narrow valleys where settlements and agriculture are concentrated.[15] Mulk (1991: 18) writes, "the slope varies from level in the main valley and associated farms and terraces, to very steep on the upper mountain slopes." There are over 600 villages in the district and the average farm size is 14.8 chakorums[16] with 99 per cent land use intensity (Bhatti et al., 1994: ix). A road network connects valley roads to villages, but it is poorly developed both in terms of overall length and standard. In the last decade through the help of District Council all major valleys now have jeepable tracks, but their conditions are generally poor (Mulk, 1991: 21).

The climate in Chitral District varies throughout the year. The summers are dry and warm and the winters are extremely cold and can last up to seven months. Rainfall varies considerably from mean annual values of 650 mm in the lower valley to widely varying values in and near the mountains depending on the width of the valley, valley winds and altitude. Very little agro-climatological data are available beyond Chitral town; the only two meterological stations in the district are located in Chitral town and Drosh which are in the lower valley at altitudes of less than 1, 500 meters. It is estimated that the district receives between 250 mm and 1000 mm of rainfall per year. Rainfall in the upper areas of Chitral is low with the extreme northwest region of the

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[15]The following figures indicate land use in the district: 47% of the land is glaciated area and is perpetually snow-covered; 25% is predominantly stones, boulders, and bare rock; 24% is forest and grazing area; and 4% is agricultural land and other miscellaneous land types, such as water bodies, barren lands including cultivable wastes, sand bars and gravel (Mulk, 1991: 19).

[16]Four chakorums are approximately one acre.

district getting less than 200 mm of rain a year. Most of the rainfall in these areas is during winter and spring as "all the moisture content of the monsoon [during summer and autumn] becomes almost exhausted over the plains of India and Pakistan before reaching these remote valleys" (Ud Din, 1990: 19). Chitral District is also a region prone to earthquakes.

During the winter months, the entire district is virtually cut off from the rest of the country as the Lowari Mountain Pass which makes vehicular access possible into and out of the district is blocked by snow. Although air travel is still possible to and from Peshawar, the provincial capital which lies 400 km south of Chitral, this link is also severely affected by the weather. The only "all weather" route available is through Afghanistan, but sensitive borders make travel via this route dangerous.

Chitral District's geographical position and topography, therefore, make it isolated from the rest of Pakistan. Furthermore, "[d]ry and cold climate, paucity of agricultural land, inaccessible nature of the terrain, fragile environment, and marginalized nature of its resources [have] made human existence here an extremely difficult task" (Mulk, 1990: 4).

History

Little is known about the early history of Chitral, in particular the period prior to the 14th century, due to a lack of written accounts on the area (Ud Din, 1990: 19). What is known is that the former state of Chitral remained totally independent during most of its recorded history and has been shaped by Persian -- present day Iran -- Chinese and Arabian influence. Arab influence continues to retain a strong hold in the community which is evident in the people's practice of Islam.

In the 14th century, Chitral was a single political and administrative state, ruled by an autocratic ruling family, the Raise. During their reign Islam, the Kho culture and Khowar -- the local language of Chitral -- started to spread to all areas of Chitral. The Raise ruled for three centuries until the end of the 16th century (1320-1595) when they were succeeded by the Katoor family, also of Central Asian origin and believed to have descended from the Moghuls.

When the Katoor dynasty began, the former state of Chitral extended from Gilgit to Chagan Sarai and Kafiristan in Afghanistan. During the reign of the Katoor family around the 1930s western education was introduced to the elite families of the area. A feudal or caste system developed with the hierarchy as follows: the *lals* -- nobles -- who ruled over the state at the top; those entrusted primarily with military duties in the middle; the *Chirmugh* who worked on the nobles' land at the bottom.

Work done by the *Chirmugh* was in the form of forced labour such as tilling the land, constructing forts, private houses and water channels for the ruling class. This work for which the *Chirmugh* were not paid is known locally as *boli* . In addition to forced labour, the *Chirmugh* were required to pay *ushur*, a grain tax, to the ruling class who falsely claimed that this tax was an Islamic obligation of paying religious dues.

A turning point in the history of Chitral and its people came in 1879 when relationships were established with Kashmir which led to an indirect contact with British India. The Mehtar -- the ruler --, Aman-ul Mulk, fearing the threat of Afghan expansion into the State, sought an alliance with the Maharaja of Kashmir. During this period, the British were also concerned about the continuous southern advance of Russia which was threatening the northern borders of India, and hence, wanted indirect, if not direct control over the states guarding the passes of the Hindu Kush. They advised the Maharaja to accept the allegiance and thus the Kashmir-Chitral treaty was signed. Many people were against the alliance established with the British and Kashmir, fearing that such ties might be harmful to the independence of the state. In 1892, Chitral's connections with the countries north of the Hindu Kush came to an end as a result of a border agreement with Afghanistan which deprived Chitral of its territories of Bashgal and Asmar; since then, Chitral has had relations only with regions lying south of the Hindu Kush. Mehtar Aman-ul Mulk also died in 1892, and the succession to his domain was disputed amongst his three sons and his exiled brother for three years. A general uprising began against the British. The British took full control over Chitral and ruled through Aman-ul Mulk's fourteen year old son, Shuja-ul-Mulk, whom they had provisionally recognized as Mehtar. The state continued to face aggression by the Afghans and in August 1919, a Peace Treaty was signed by the British India Government and the Royal Government of Afghanistan at Rawalpindi. Both sides withdrew their troops and peace prevailed once again in Chitral State.

Although Chitral became a part of Pakistan in 1947, it did not merge fully with the rest of the country until 1969. However, the Mehtar was influenced by democratic forces, leading to changes in the system in 1953. The Mehtar was replaced by the rule of the Pakistan Government represented by a Political Agent who was appointed from the civil service. Changes were introduced at this time in the system of land tenure, abolishing compulsory labour and military service as well as high taxation. Furthermore, formal education for the public was introduced in the State in 1954. In 1969, Chitral became part of the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan as a District and a District Commissioner took over the governing of Chitral.

As an independent state, Chitral has had very limited indigenous resources including finances (Bignold, 1994). Although Chitral attained access to greater resources for development when it merged into Pakistan, the pace of development has remained slow. This is due in part to its isolated nature in relation to the rest of Pakistan and its inaccessiblity seven months of the year during winter. Moreover, development in the district has been affected because of ethnic differences as the Chitralis, mainly of Central Asian origin, are ethnic minorities in a province (North West Frontier Province) which is majority Patan (informal field interview with Dr. Faizi, history professor at the Government Inter College for boys in Booni Valley). The slow pace of development is evident in all institutional sectors of society including the economy, healthcare, rural development and, particularly, schooling.

However, in the 1970s, the government of the late Prime Minister, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, took interest in the development of Chitral. Schools were established and work was begun on the Lowari Tunnel (which is not yet complete) which would connect Chitral to the rest of Pakistan even during the winter months. An important change for the people took place when the Bhutto government abolished the system of *ushur* which was still being practiced even after the merger. In the '970s, development initiatives by the Aga Khan Development Network also began to take place in the field of education, healthcare and rural development. In the 1980s the Chitral Area Development Project began work in rural development as well.

The People of Chitral

Origin, Religion, Language

The people of Chitral belong to several ethnic groups, but the majority of them are known as the Kho. The original Kho are of Aryan descent; those who immigrated later into Chitral came from other countries like Badakhshan, Wakhan, Russia, China, parts of Afghanistan, and from other regions in Pakistan like the Northern Areas, Dir and Swat. These immigrants absorbed themselves into the original Kho by living in the same villages, intermarrying, adopting Khowar (language of the original Kho), Kho customs and other ways of life of the Kho people. In later years, Islam, which the immigrants had all embraced, played an important role as a unifying factor. There are also 10 small tribes[17] in Chitral who have immigrated from different areas surrounding Chitral, who speak their own languages and, to a certain extent, who observe their own

[17]These tribes are the Kalash, Bashgali, Gowari, Damali, Dangarik, Pathans, Gojar, Wokhi, Badakshi or Madaglashti, Mundji.

customs. However, despite interaction with the Kho and the fact that these tribes are all Muslim with the exception of the Kalash, they have managed to preserve their identity.

Approximately 2000 Kalash live in the southwest corner of Chitral and continue to maintain their ancient beliefs and culture, including ancestor worship and worship of sacred objects, in the face of Islamic influence and centuries of domination by other peoples (Baig, 1994: Sd Din, 1990: 30). The rest of the Chitrali population practices Islam: 35% are Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims and follow His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV; 65% are Sunni Muslims (see Table 4-1).

Table 4-1

Distribution of Shia Ismaili and Sunni Muslims Among Districts in Chitral

Tehsil (District)	Ismailis (%)	Sunnis (%)
Mastuj	90	10
Mulkoh	23	77
Torkoh	40	60
Lotkoh	95	5
Chitral	5	95
Drosh	5	95

Source: A prominent leader and politician in Booni Valley, Afzal Ali; confirmed by AKES, P (Chitral).

The local language of Chitral, Khowar, consists of words taken from Persian, Sanskrit, Shina, Burushaski, Wakhi, Pashto, Kirghiz, Uzbek, Turkish, Arabic and many of unknown origin. The Arabic element in Khowar came in later after the spread of Islam (Afzal Khan, 1980: 8; Baig, 1994: 8). It is a language originally without a script. People who are able to read and write it have adopted Urdu/Persian scripts for Khowar. Persian is spoken by a few of the "aristocracy"[18] and by the inhabitants of Madaklasht. "The old records show that Persian was the court language of the State when the Mehtars were ruling" (Afzal Khan, 1980: 8). Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, is also understood and spoken by many people. The medium of instruction in schools is Urdu. Furthermore, men who go to the "down district"[19] for employment

[18]People who probably once belonged to or whose fathers belonged to aristocratic families
[19]Local people refer to the "down district" as the regions of Pakistan outside the Chitral District.

also learn Urdu. English, Pakistan's other national language, is also spoken and understood by some people.

Population and Economic Activity

According to the 1994 *Aga Khan Education Service Northern Region Education Planning Exercise Statistics*, the population in Chitral today is estimated at 329, 343 with an annual population growth rate of about 3.1%. The estimated population in 1990 of approximately 150,000 males and 141, 000 females shows that there are more males than females in the district (Ud Din, 1990 in Bignold, 1994: 16).

The majority of the families in the district derive their livelihood from subsistence farming. The household, which consists of an average of 8.7 people, functions primarily as a self-contained economic unit, but many families have members, primarily men, in the labour market which makes it possible for households to earn cash income (Bhatti et al., 1994). It is estimated that over 50% of men are involved in full-time farming, 20% in casual labour including part-time farm work, road construction, masonry and carpentry, 15% in salaried jobs (teachers, doctors), 8.9% are self-employed (businesspeople), and 8% (15 years old and over) are unemployed[20]. 98% of the women are involved primarily in agricultural and household activities and about 1 - 2% are in salaried jobs in the formal sector. The per capita income is estimated at US$102 per annum.

Social and economic change in Chitral has been associated with population growth, internal and outward migration, off farm employment, intensified and changing land use, economic dependency, a shrinking natural resource base, higher living standards and improved communication. Because land has been traditionally divided among sons, landholding is diminishing considerably. Shifts in patterns of consumption are evident in Chitral and these shifts have created an economy heavily dependent on income from off-farm employment. The majority of households purchase more than half their grain needs due to shortages in cultivated and cultivable land (Lawson McDowall, 1994). Wood for cooking and heating is the largest part of annual expenditure for many people. Cash incomes are also required for a range of other needs such as fertilizer, vegetable seeds, school uniforms and equipment, medical treatment, clothing, shoes, transport, *ghee* -- shortening -- , tea and sugar.

Because of Chitral's scarce natural resources, poor communications and lack of industry, most of the money spent or invested in the district comes from outside the

[20]"Unemployed" has not been defined by the source where the data was located.

area. This makes Chitral heavily dependent on government spending and down-country economy. My own observations from field work as well as McDowall's (1994) findings suggest that most households have access to some sort of off-farm employment. McDowall (1994) has found that the largest single sector is employment in the "down district", which includes semi-permanent migration, seasonal migration and men going abroad. Just over 60% of jobs are financed by external sources - down country, armed services and the local government. The other 40% of employment comes through a local market from skilled labour (masons, carpenters, drivers and cooks); regular labour (peons, watchmen); unskilled labour usually on daily wages; private service sector (lawyers, bank employees, shopkeepers, hoteliers, jeep owners) (McDowell, 1994).

Social change at the household level due to this economic change has resulted in the erosion of traditions of mutual assistance and the increasing responsibility taken by women for agriculture (McDowall, 1994: 8). There are also important economic and social divisions within Chitrali villages today in terms of land and asset ownership, access to education, employment opportunities and caste and family connections. These economic and social shifts are greatly impacting women in the district. Consequently, Chitral District is an ideal area for my research which looks at the way Chitrali women understand, interpret and incorporate these changes in their lives.

The rest of this chapter will focus on the history of schooling in the District. This will provide a background to the discussions on how women's schooling in Chitral, in particular in Booni Valley, is perceived by the women and how it is affecting their lives and their labour force participation.

History of Girls' Schooling in Chitral

Schooling for both girls and boys in Chitral District is a relatively recent development. Before 1913, there were no formal learning institutions in the district. Faizi (1992: 1) writes,

> [t]he mosques and houses of religious scholars in a few villages...used to serve as literacy centres where...youngsters [from noble families] were taught the text of *Holy Quran* and some booklets in Persian. These circles had no support from the state, and the students of these centres could only read and write basic Persian.

Some scholars and theologians mainly from the upper class ruling families had been to schools in the Indian sub-continent, Turkistan, Kashghar and Samarqand. During British rule, the Kashmir route to India was opened, and routes to centres of learning in Russian and Chinese Turkistan were closed. Hence, princes were sent to British India where they received Western education in schools, colleges and universities. Some men belonging to lower categories of the ruling families, as well as a few who did not belong to ruling families, also attended the schools in British India. However, men usually studied in mosque schools (Faizi, 1990; Faizi, 1992).

In 1913, a *maktab* was established in the state of Chitral in Chitral town which catered to children from lower categories of the ruling family. The curriculum consisted of Persian, Urdu and Arabic primers (textbooks), and the aim of this school was to teach children how to read and write. By 1936, sixteen schools of a similar nature had been established in other villages where noble families lived (Faizi, 1990; Faizi, 1992).

In 1936, the Mehtar died and was succeeded by his son, Mohammed Nasirul Mulk. The new Mehtar was educated in both Western knowledge and in the traditional philosophical studies of the Orient, and he expressed great desire for his followers to have western education. In 1939, Mehtar Mohammed Nasirul Mulk laid the foundation for the first anglo-vernacular school in Chitral town (Ud Din, 1990: 24). It began as a primary school and was upgraded to middle and high school standards in 1944 and 1951 respectively, before being taken over by the government with the merger in 1969. The curriculum of these schools included English, Mathematics, Urdu, Social Sciences and *Quranic* education. Eventually, all the schools following the Persian curriculum shifted to this system. By 1969, there were some primary, middle and high schools as

well as an Intermediate College in the district which were all turned over to the government of Pakistan.

Girls' schooling was also introduced in Chitral District with the first primary school being established in 1955 in Drosh. Before the merger, five girls primary schools were established including the one in Drosh. Three[21] of them were located in Lower Chitral and two[22] of them in Upper Chitral. These schools were introduced in key villages in the district because of the villages' geographic location and their economic and administrative activity. However, prior to the establishment of girls' schooling, there were already some Ismaili girls in Booni Valley who were attending boys' school. This was due mainly to guidance by Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III who began directing his followers in the 1940s to educate their children, especially their daughters.

After the merger, the late Prime Minister, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto directed the provinicial government to open a number of schools in Chitral, including girls' schools in central villages. As a result, 18 government girls primary schools (GGPS) were established in the 1970s. In the 1980s, particularly during the latter part of the decade, the number of GGPS increased rapidly with 65 schools being opened. However, most of these schools are located in Lower Chitral, and those located in Upper Chitral were and continue to be inaccessible to girls living in remote villages of this sub-division.

In the 1980s, the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan[23] also began initiatives to establish girls' primary schools in [illegible] populated villages where no government schools were accessible. Most of the schools are located in Upper Chitral and Tehsil Lotkoh where most Ismailis live.[24] However, participation in these schools is open to girls of all religious background, and a few boys have also enrolled in some Aga Khan Schools. Today, there are approximately 51 Aga Khan Schools as well as 19 coaching centres.[25] AKES, P has also established two hostels, Aga Khan Hostel, Booni and Aga Khan Hostel, Dolomuch, for Ismaili students. The former has place for 51 girls coming from villages outside Booni (although this year some girls from Booni were allowed to stay at the hostel) where there are no girls' high schools. The latter has been

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[21]Drosh (1955); Chitral Town (1961); Koghuzi (1965)

[22]Booni Valley (1964); Mastuj (1964)

[23]AKES, P recognizes that the provision of schooling should be the government's responsibility first; AKES, P is involved only when the government does not provide schooling for girls.

[24]See Table 4-1 for distribution of Ismailis in Chitral District.

[25]Coaching centers are established in villages where there are no middle schools and where AKES, P does not plan to open a formal middle school. These centers expect the girls to purse their studies independently, but provide tutors to assist students with difficulties in English, Math, Science and Urdu.

recently established and is expected to house about 100 boys so that they may attend local schools and colleges in Chitral town.

Current Situation of Girls' Schooling

The overall number of girls' primary schools in Chitral District has increased in the past years. However, there are still fewer girls' primary schools than boys' primary schools. While the number of middle schools is about equal, there are significantly fewer girls' high schools in the district. There is only one government girls' high school for all of Upper Chitral and it is located in Booni Valley. The other two are in Lower Chitral: Drosh and Chitral town. AKES, P has also established an Aga Khan High School for girls in Garamchashma Valley, Lower Chitral. In November 1994, a Girls' Higher Secondary School, offering the Humanities program, was opened in Chitral town. In 1994, the current government, led by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, also announced that a Girls' Higher Secondary School be open in Booni Valley. Table 4-2 provides the number of AKES, P, Government and Private Schools by level in Chitral District in 1994; Table 4-3 presents the distribution of Government Schools by Gender and Level in Chitral District in 1994.

Table 4-2

Number of AKES, P, Government and Private Schools by Level in Chitral District (1994)

	AKES, P	Government (boys and girls)	Private (boys and girls)
Primary	35	534	7
Middle	15	43	2
High	1	42	2
Total	**51**	**619**	**11**

Note: Primary = 1-5; Middle = 6-8; High = 9-10

Source: *Aga Khan Education Service Northern Region Education Planning Exercise Statistics.* Islamabad, 1994: 10.

Table 4-3

Distribution of Government Schools by Gender and Level in Chitral District (1994)

	Girls	Boys
Primary	98	250*
Middle	13	30
High	3	39

*Mosque Primary Schools = +187

Source: *Aga Khan Education Service Northern Region Education Planning Exercise Statistics.* Islamabad, 1994: 11.

Indicators of Access to Education

Literacy, enrolment and continuation rates are the indicators which are generally used to assess attainment of and access to education. Literacy, as the ability to read and write, can be both achieved and measured independently of schooling. However, there is a tendency to conflate the two concepts so literacy measures are often actually a measure of schooling. Literacy rates for males and females in Chitral District will be presented below. Figures for males' and females' enrolment in the district will also be presented although calculations as percentages are unavailable. Statistics on continuation rates are unavailable for the district.

Literacy rates

Literacy[26], as an index of educational opportunities in a given society, has been defined as "the ability to read, the ability to write or the completion of any schooling, and comprises a kind of summary indicator of very minimal access to education, usually formal, sometimes non-formal" (Smock, 1981: 40). Varying definitions of "literacy" in Pakistan have affected the way literacy rates are calculated and the way they reflect the nation's literacy levels. The definition of literacy in 1951 was "the ability to read any clear print in any language." This definition was altered in 1961 to

[26]Most literature assumes a single literacy in terms of reading and writing skills. Literacy is viewed as a universal constant whose acquisition is believed to lead to higher cognitive skills, improved logical thinking, critical inquiry and self-conscious reflection (Street, 1992: 11). Street notes that, "[l]iteracy...has come to be associated with crude and often ethnocentric stereotypes of "other cultures" and represents ways of perpetuating the notion of a 'great divide' between 'modern' and 'traditional' societies that is less acceptable when expressed in other terms" (1992: 7). However, researchers who are dissatisfied with the aforementioned assumptions of literacy "have come to view literacy as inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in society, and to recognize the variety of cultural practices associated with reading and writing [as well as orality] in different contexts" (Street, 1992: 11).

"the ability to read with understanding in any language." In 1981, literacy was defined as "the ability to read and write a simple letter in any language and to read a newspaper" (Pakistan Ministry of Education in Merchant, 1992). Indicators taken from these three years reflect the way literacy rates have been altered by the changing definitions. Between 1951 and 1961, the literacy rate dropped from 16.4% to 13.6%. In 1981, the literacy rate increased to 26.2% (Planning Commission, 1987: 252).

Literacy rates specific for Chitral District are all estimates and those rates appearing in formal documents are not consistent with each other. Furthermore, there is no indication in these documents about the definition of literacy which was used to derive the numbers. The female and male literacy rates of Chitral District presented below in Table 4-4 have been estimated by the Aga Khan Education Service, Chitral. The definition of literacy used to derive these figures is the completion of primary schooling and excludes literacy in relation to the *Holy Quran*. The Pakistani male and female literacy rates in 1990 and the Pakistani literacy rates in the rural areas in 1981 are presented in Table 4-5 and 4-6 respectively to provide a comparison of the Chitrali literacy rates.

Table 4-4

1992 Literacy Rates in Chitral District (12 years old +)

Female	4.1%
Male	14.3%
Total	9.3%

Source: Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan, 1994.

Table 4-5

1990 Literacy Rates in Pakistan (15 years old +)

Female	21%
Male	47%

Adapted from: UNDP, *Human Development Report.* New York: University Press: 1992.

Table 4-6

1981 Literacy Rates in Rural Areas of Pakistan

Female	7.3%
Male	26.2%

Adapted from: Pakistan Planning Commission, *Seventh Five Year Plan 1988-93*. Islamabad, 1987: 252.

These indicators reveal gender as well as regional disparities with regards to female literacy in Chitral District. It is apparent that literacy rates for both females and males in Chitral are lower than female and male literacy rates in Pakistan. Female literacy rates in Chitral are also lower than male literacy rates. Furthermore, they are amongst the lowest literacy rates of women in rural areas of Pakistan. The data thus indicates that there are factors affecting female literacy in the district such as the recent establishment of girls' schooling.

Enrolment and distribution of students in schools

The enrolment and distribution rates of girls in schools are also low in Chitral District as compared to boys. Table 4-7 provides a summary of the total school-aged population in the district as well as the total enrolment of students. Table 4-8 illustrates the enrolment of students at the primary, middle, and high school levels; and Table 4-9 looks specifically at the distribution of boys and girls at the three schooling levels.

Table 4-7

Summary Table of Girls' and Boys' Enrolment in Chitral District (1994)

Total school-aged population (4-14)*	107, 711
Total school-aged girls	53, 147
Total school-aged boys	54, 564
Total school-aged population as a (%) of total population	33%
Students currently enrolled	49, 522
Students currently enrolled as (%) of total school-aged population	46%
Total girls enrolled	16, 242
Girls enrolled as (%) of total school-aged female population	31%
Boys enrolled as (%) of total school-aged male population	61%

*Note: The ages between 4 - 14 repr[illegible]nt the base population; however, school ages of school children may be o[illegible]r (information not available)

Source: *Aga Khan Education Service Northern Region Education Planning Exercise Statistics.* Islamabad, 1994: 15.

Table 4-8

Total Enrolment at the Primary, Middle and High School Levels in Chitral District (1994)

Primary level	36, 286
Middle level	9,858
High school level	3,378

Source: *Aga Khan Education Service Northern Region Education Planning Exercise Statistics.* Islamabad, 1994: 18.

Table 4-9

Distribution of Students by Level and Gender in Chitral District (1994)

	Girls	**Boys**
Primary	12, 838	23, 425
Middle	2, 451	7, 407
High	953	2, 425

Source: *Aga Khan Education Service Northern Region Education Planning Exercise Statistics.* Islamabad, 1994: 21.

The data reveals that less than half of all school-aged girls are enrolled in school. Boys' enrolment rate as a percent of the total school-aged male population is also almost twice that of girls. Overall, there appears to be a decrease in both the boys' and girls' retention rates from primary to high school, and it is much lower for girls than boys. There are fewer girls in high school which is probably due in large part to the unavailability of girls' high schools as well as cultural and financial factors.[27]

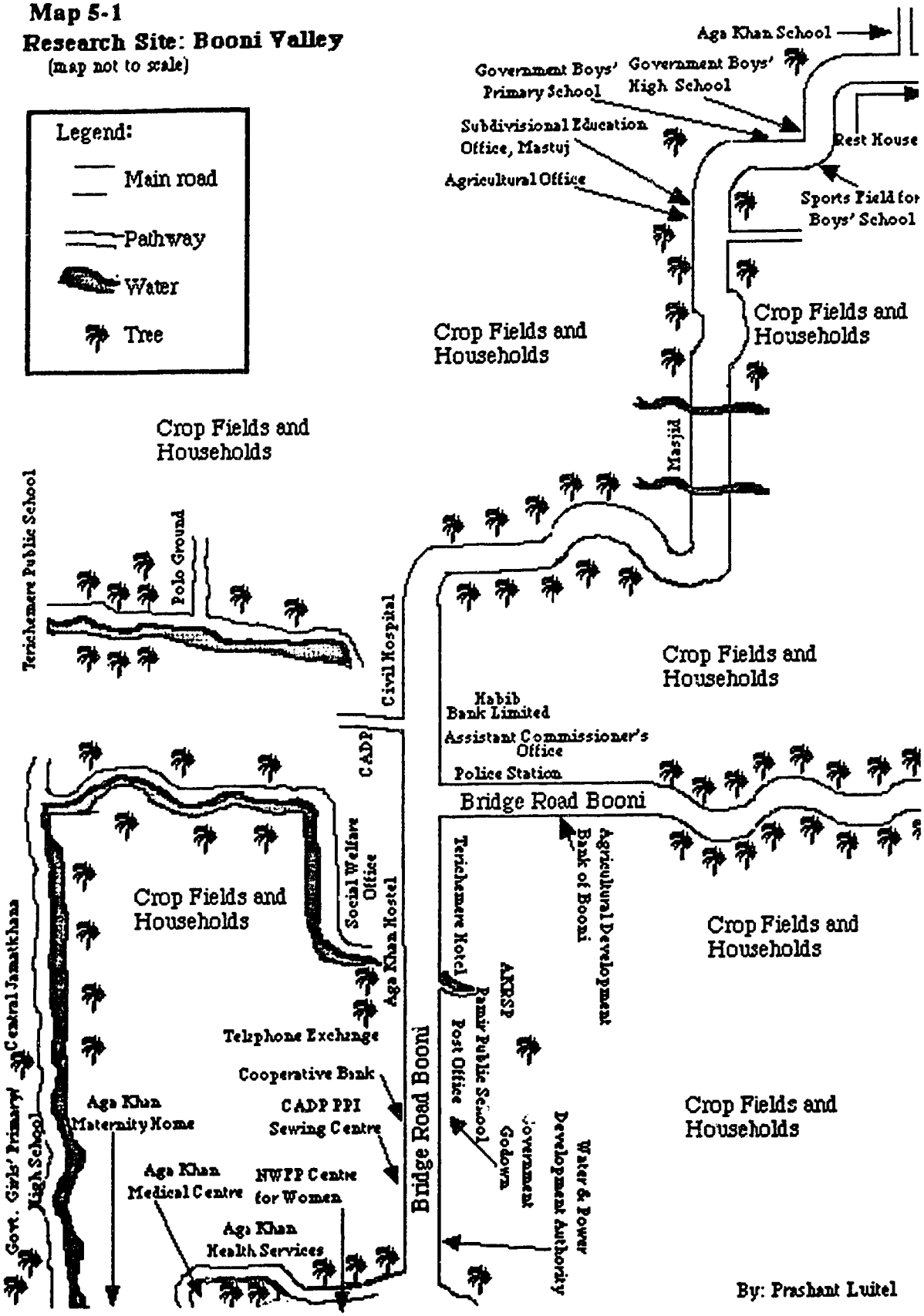
The history of schooling in Chitral as well as the contemporary data on schooling in the district indicate that many women, especially older women, have little or no schooling. Schooling is just beginning to be widely distributed among girls, although many still do not attend or attend only for short periods of time. The population in Chitral is, therefore, comprised of women who have different experiences of schooling, some with no schooling, some with very little and some with high school or post-secondary levels of achievement. Chitral District is a valuable area to address my research problem on women's perspectives of schooling and work as the district presents diverse schooling experiences among the women.

[27]This will be discussed further in Chapter VI "Women's Perceptions of Schooling".

CHAPTER V:

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH SITE - BOONI VALLEY

Map 5-1
Research Site: Booni Valley
(map not to scale)



Village Location and Facilities

It was 9:00 a.m. on a warm summer morning in August, 1994, the day after my arrival to Chitral town. My suitcases were being loaded into the jeep for the journey to Booni Valley which is the administrative centre of Upper Chitral. Booni Valley has a population of about 7340 and lies about 74 km North-East of Chitral town. However, unpaved, windy mountain roads make the journey almost four hours. On the day I travelled to the valley, the journey took slightly longer because of construction to pave the road between Booni and Chitral town. During the journey, I was mesmerized by the rugged, barren landscape all around me, the Chitral river, at times thousands of feet below us, to the left of the road and the villages interspersed in valleys between the mountains. I observed many men and young boys walking along the road, some of them travelling with herds of sheep and goat. I saw only a few women walking along the road; their bodies and faces were covered with their *bourkhas*[28] and they were accompanied by a man or a group of men. I was fascinated by the "taxi jeeps"[29], some with many men piled into them to the point of being overcrowded, and some filled beyond capacity with goods like firewood, grain, beds, chairs and other similar items. I only saw a few women sitting in the jeeps; their faces were veiled and most of them occupied the front seat of the vehicles. As we drove through some villages, many children, mainly boys, were playing by the shops or near their homes, and a number of men were sitting and talking on the shop porches. I saw a few women in the villages and they were all working in the crop fields.

As we rounded the last bend in the road before crossing the bridge into Booni Valley, I noticed how lush and green the village looked compared to some of the other villages through which we had passed. I had been previously told that, agriculturally, Booni Valley is relatively more prosperous compared to most villages in Upper Chitral. It is in a two-crop zone which means that two crops[30] can be grown during the year. Villages beyond Booni are one-crop zones[31] because winter usually starts earlier in these areas of high elevation. Agricultural production has also increased in Booni with the introduction of wheat seed and chemical fertilizer.

We crossed the bridge into the valley and traveled along the "Bridge Road Booni," a paved road. We passed many fields and homes as well as a "modern-

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[28]Long traditional dress which includes a veil; worn by some Muslim women.
[29]For passengers and/or goods.
[30]In Lower Chitral, wheat and maize is grown; from Baranais to Booni, wheat and rice is grown
[31]Only wheat is grown in the one-crop zones of Upper Chitral.

looking" building which may one day be equipped as a microwave telephone exchange. Many trees lined the street. We entered into the *bazaar*, the main street and "economic hub" of the village. We passed many shops and other professional and administrative offices in the *bazaar*, including the agricultural development bank, some lawyers offices and the civil judge's office, before reaching a three-way intersection, on the corner of which the police station is located. The village has a post office, three banks, a selection of shops, a government godown[32] which sells wheat and an Aga Khan Foundation heli-pad. Unlike many villages in the district, particularly in Upper Chitral, which have no electricity[33] or phone connection, Booni has a diesel electricity generator and a phone exchange. An Assistant Commissioner also looks after political matters and justice in Upper Chitral, and a District Judge sits in Court once a week. We turned left at the intersection and drove a few metres before arriving at the gate of the Aga Khan Hostel, Booni, located right in the heart of the *bazaar*, and which would be my "home" for the next three months.

The Aga Khan Hostel, established in 1989, is a residence for 51 Ismaili girls throughout the academic year.[34] These girls come mainly from villages in Upper Chitral where high school facilities are not available for girls. They attend the Government Girls' High School, Booni, which is the only girls' high school in all of Upper Chitral, and one of the only three in the entire district. Furthermore, the Government Girls Primary School, Booni, established in 1964, is one of the first girls' primary schools in the district although girls' schooling became popular after the 1980s in the valley. A few girls from Booni Valley began receiving education earlier than this as they attended boys' school[35], making them some of the first women in the district to get education and employment. The valley also has a Government Boys' Primary School and a Government Boys' High School. Some children also attend one of three fee paying, private schools: the Aga Khan School, a primary school for girls; the Terichmere Public School and the Pamir Public School which both offer co-education

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[32]Government warehouse where wheat is sold in bulk.

[33]The district is not connected to the national grid. Some mini-hydel plants with capacities of less than 25 KV have been installed at various locations; Chitral town has a hydro electric power generator; with the assistance of the Federal Republic of Germany, the government is setting up a three megawatts hydro plant in Upper Chitral at Reshun.

[34]The hostel also has a staff of about 12 people, including a gardener, cooks, an electrician, watchmen, a storekeeper (looks after supplies like food), an accountant as well as a matron and an assistant matron, both of whom reside at the hostel with the girls.

[35]Due to guidance from Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III, spiritual leader of Shia Ismaili Muslims, to educate girls.

in English medium.[36] In the mid 1980s, an Intermediate College[37] for boys was also opened in Booni, and in October 1994, the government announced that a Girls' Higher Secondary School would soon be established in the village. Currently, most girls in the valley who continue with higher studies after completing their matriculation do so through distance education[38] from institutions like the Allama Iqbal Open University; only a few leave the district for higher training. Unlike many areas of the district where enrolment rates for boys and girls tend to be low, most of the school-age boys and girls in Booni attend one of the schools in the valley.

Booni is also one of the few villages in the district where the local people have relatively easy access to healthcare. It is the only village in all of Upper Chitral to have civil hospital. This institution employs three doctors and a lady health visitor (LHV). Everytime I walked by the hospital or through the hospital compound, I saw many jeeps which my research collaborator explained belonged to people from neighbouring villages as well as some faraway villages in the upper areas. The village also has an Aga Khan Medical Health Centre which employs three LHVs, and an Aga Khan Maternity Home which was scheduled to open around November or December 1994. In addition, Booni Valley has a Population Centre.

A variety of activities including adult classes and an industrial home for handicraft work have been set-up for women by the Social Welfare Organization. A North West Frontier Province (NWFP) Small Industries Handicraft Development Centre for Women is also active in the village. In addition to having social organization unit branch offices in Booni, the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme and the Chitral Area Development Project also have active women's organizations (WOs) in the valley.

The map of Booni Valley, Map 5-1, presented at the beginning of this chapter provides a picture of some of the facilities in the village, many of which are located along the main street in the *bazaar*. This map is not to scale and illustrates only certain areas of the valley.

Village Economy

The economy and administrative structure in Booni Valley are relatively developed compared to other villages in the district. Being the sub-division headquarter

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[36]In this context, the word "public" is used to refer to private schools.
[37]Higher secondary schooling offering class 11 and 12. Humanities and science subjects are both offered at this college.
[38]Distance education refers to learning done through correspondence.

of Upper Chitral, Booni Valley has undergone much economic growth and development. This has created opportunities for both men and women to get employment. Many men in the valley have entered the job market working in the armed services[39]; local government institutions as teachers or doctors, non-government institutions; or the private service sector as shopkeepers, lawyers, jeep owners, hoteliers and bank employees. Others are employed as drivers, masons, carpenters, peons[40], chowkidars (watchmen) or as casual labourers paid on a daily basis. Some have also migrated to the "down district"[41] in search of employment, although this trend is no longer that evident in Booni (Pettifer, 1994: 6).[42] Economic growth in the valley has opened up opportunities for men to supplement their farming incomes locally by hiring themselves out as casual labourers. At least one person in every household in Booni has some form of off-farm employment. Furthermore, about 5% of women in Booni have also entered the paid labour force working in local educational and health institutions, rural development programs as well as with the Social Welfare Organization. Some women also participate in informal sector income-generating activities like poultry farming; this is primarily through their participation in the WOs of the AKRSP and CADP.

Village Life

Life of Women in Booni Valley

It is 3:30 a.m. and daylight is just breaking in Booni Valley. Everyone is still asleep in Naseema's household except Naseema . She is a 23 year old mother of two boys and a girl, and she has never been to school. She is already awake and ready to begin her work. She describes some of her daily activities:

> First, I wake up early in the morning.[43] I wash my hands and face for *namaz*[44]. I say my prayers. I make dough for the *bret* [45] and put water

[39]This includes the Pakistan Army or the Chitral Scouts who guard the international borders: Afghanistan etc.
[40]An unskilled laborer available to do jobs tasks like bringing tea for employers, getting mail.
[41]Semi-permanent or seasonal (winter/spring) migration to areas out of the district, ie. Peshawar, Karachi, Islamabad, for employment.
[42]Booni's economic development attracts migrants from elsewhere in Upper Chitral. Some remain in Booni while others journey further down to Chitral Town or into other parts of Pakistan.
[43]Translated as 3:30 a.m. or "when the lights come on"; however, participant explained later in the interview that she does not know how to tell time; my understanding is that she either woke up at the call for prayers, *azaan*, or when daylight was breaking; "when the lights come on" refers to the

> for tea on the fire. After this, I go to milk and to give fodder to the cows. Then I wake up my children, wash them, give them breakfast and send them all to school. Then I wake up my husband and give him breakfast before he goes to work. Then I take the cows out for grazing and I collect the fodder. I bring the cows back and start preparing luch for the children. When they come back they eat. Then I wash their clothes. Then I send them to the *Hafeez*[46] for *Quranic* lessons....Then I take the cattle out again and then I bring them back home and I prepare dinner....If I have time, I make *kalins*[47] and sweaters for my children. I do not buy them from the *bazaar*. I stitch clothes also. If I have no time during the day, I stitch them at night. (field interview with Naseema)

In addition to these productive and reproductive roles described by Naseema, she is also responsible for fetching water, cleaning the home, taking care of the vegetable garden, as well as cleaning, spinning and weaving wool. Naseema also has seasonal tasks "such as weeding in the fields, collecting extra fodder, harvesting the crops, separating grain from straw, gathering fruit, sweeping up dead leaves and working with the wool in the winter months" (Mubarak Shah, 1994: 5). Naseema becomes very busy during the planting and harvesting seasons. During the months of October and November her workload increases with harvesting rice and planting wheat, and during the months of June and July with harvesting wheat and planting rice.

Naseema explains another reason for her increase workload during these seasons:

> I have a lot of work; I have to do the work of a man also. I have to water the crops, harvest the crops, collect the harvest and water the rice and to look after the crops....When he [my husband] ploughs, then I help him. [Researcher also saw her cutting firewood once]. I have to do this because my husband goes to...work. Sometimes he works from morning to night; sometimes he is there until they turn the lights out. Sometimes he comes early. Now he comes home for lunch; before he didn't. There is no man at home who can work with me so I have to do all the work by myself. (field interview)

Naseema's story reveals a number of things about gender roles in her culture. Firstly, it provides insight into the daily reproductive and productive activities of most women her age and older in the village. Furthermore, it describes men's farming roles in this

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electricity which is usually generated from 3:00 a.m. - 5:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. in summer and 4:30 a.m. - 6:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m. in winter.

[44]Prayers.

[45]Local bread first cooked over fire and then baked inside fire.

[46]A person who has memorized the *Holy Quran*.

[47]Local carpets made out of remnants of sheep wool and which are dyed by the women.

culture, like watering and harvesting the crops, ploughing the fields as well as collecting and cutting firewood. Men are also involved with planting crops. As Naseema explains, experiences centred around reproductive and productive roles which have been a part of women's lives for generations in the valley and which "[were once] shared and met with the men's [farm work]" (field interview with Azada) are not being shared much anymore. Naseema's husband is one of many men engaged in off-farm employment, leaving women like Naseema to take care of men's farm work in addition to their own household and agricultural labour. In some cases, when families are able to afford it, labourers are hired to do the ploughing and harvesting. Shifts in family structure from the traditional joint-family to the nuclear family are apparent in Naseema's home. This leaves women like her with no help at home while their children are at school and their husbands are employed elsewhere. As Naseema describes,

> [i]f I did not do the man's job, my husband would have to stay at home. How would we get money then, from where would we get money, how would our children go to school then? How would they be able to get education? How would we be able to afford their expenses? (field interview with Naseema)

Naseema's voice speaks clearly to this when she says, "I do all the work at home....I do it by myself" (field interview with Naseema). These trends are visible in many households as the division of labour is being shaped by the changing economic and social trends.

Naseema's words also reveal a cultural pattern where the responsibility of earning for the household falls primarily on the men. As one woman expresses, "this is his [a man's] biggest responsibility -- to earn for the household" (field interview with Azada). Women are rarely participate in wage labour. Socio-cultural traditions restrict women's space to the household and do not permit them to participate in functions where there is contact with "outsiders" (Malik, 1993: 7). The men also bring home all the household items, including things like food, clothes and school books because the women are not allowed to go into the *bazaar*. Furthermore, men are the main decision-makers in the household, but some men do consult the women for their opinions. In the absence of a male head of the household, the oldest woman makes decisions usually with consultation of her older sons. Shahnaz's description of decision-making in her home reflects the areas of decision-making in which men and women in this culture are involved:

> My father makes most of the decisions in the home regarding schooling, marriage and money. My mother makes decisions about washing clothes, cooking and caring for the vegetable garden. My father decides about planting and harvesting rice, wheat and corn; my mother does her own women's work in the field...tying the wheat which the men cut and collecting fodder. (field interview)

Women, therefore, make decisions primarily in areas regarding cooking, cleaning, vegetable gardening and childcare. Decisions involving finances, marriage, schooling, and what to plant in the fields are usually made by men.

However, women's patterns of remaining within the household and, to some extent, of decision-making are changing as many girls, like Umah and Yasmin, have started going to school and as some women, like Roshan, are entering into paid employment. These phenomena are also causing shifts in traditional gender roles.

Yasmin and Nilufer are two 16 year old girls in class 9 and class 10 at the local Girls' Government High School, Booni. Both girls begin their day around the same time as Naseema. Nilufer's family lives in Booni Valley. She describes her daily routine:

> I wake up very early in the morning. I wash my face and hands and offer prayers together with my mother. Then I get ready, have breakfast, take my school bag and go to school. Then I come home, change my clothes and have my meal. After that, I go to the *Hafeez* for more studies -- religious knowledge. I come home at 4 p.m. and rest for a while. Then I do whatever...homework I have. After this, I give my mother a helping hand with grazing the cattle. In the evening -- after sunset -- I come back home. I do some housework, look after the younger children, and then it is time for evening prayers so I pray. After offering prayers, I eat. I study for one to two hours, then go to sleep. (field interview with Umah)

Unlike Nilufer, Yasmin's family has sent her to live at the Aga Khan Hostel, Booni because their village has no girls' high school. In the following passage, Yasmin describes her daily life at the hostel:

> We [hostel girls] wake up early in the morning at 4:00 a.m. and go to *Jamatkhana* [48] [to pray]. We come back and clean our rooms and the bathroom, comb our hair and wear our school uniform. At exactly 5 a.m. we go to the study room[49] and study up to 6 a.m. After 6 a.m., we put our books away in the bags and have breakfast. Some girls go to the kitchen and dish out food for the rest of the girls.[50] When the girls finish eating, they wash their dishes. At 6:30 a.m. we get ready for school. We reach school at 6:40 a.m.[51], put our bags away and then the bell rings. We attend assembly for 15 minutes. Then we come back to our classrooms and read *Quran-e-majib*[52]. After reading *Quran-e-majib*, our first period is English, we study English, *Bhaji* teaches us English. The English period is 40 minutes. Then the bell rings for *Islamiyat Lazmi*[53]. After studying *Islamiyat Lazmi*, then it is time for *Islamiyat Ikhtiari*[54]. Like this we study for eight periods, sometimes we study for eight periods, sometimes for six periods. In P.E.T.[55] we play. We also study *Qirat*.[56] At about 1:50 p.m. school finishes. We come back [to the hostel], go to our room and change. Then we go and have lunch in the dining room. [On Thursdays], after eating, we wash our clothes. [Everyday] we read the *Holy Quran* with a religious guide. A tutor also comes to teach us math and science. First he teaches the class 9 and 10 girls who are in arts and then the class 9 and 10 girls who are in science. Then we go to play games [handball]. [On Thursdays] we collect our washed clothes and go to our rooms, then we wash up and go to *Jamatkhana* [to pray]. Then some of us serve food and we all eat our meal. After that we study until 9 p.m. and then go to our rooms. [On Thursdays], we iron our clothes and go to sleep at around 11 p.m.. (field interview with Yasmin)

Nilufer's and Yasmin's experiences give a detailed insight into lives of school age girls in the valley. School, which has become a major part of life in the valley, also appears to have shifted women's roles as school girls are now spending a large part of their day outside the household. The workload of mothers and other women in the household has increased as they must take over many responsibilities of daughters attending school. Furthermore, mothers of hostel girls have to manage without their daughters'

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[48]Prayer hall for Ismaili Muslims; the one located in the hostel is attended primarily by the hostel residents;in many Jamatkhanas, there are also facilities for Shia Ismaili children to get religious education.

[49]The "study room" in the hostel is the dining hall.

[50]Some girls are in charge of certain duties in the hostel: kitchen, sick room, room monitor, library, Jamatkhana etc.; the allocation of these duties aims to teach the girls responsibility.

[51]In summer; during winter months, the girls arrive at school about one hour later.

[52]Reading the *Holy Quran*.

[53]Islamic studies; students memorize the *Holy Quran* and its meaning, learn about the Prophet's (P.B.U.H) sayings, *hadiths*, and acquire knowledge about the ethics of Islam.

[54]Islamic studies; students learn about the importance of the *Holy Quran* and learn about the importance of the Prophet's (P.B.U.H) sayings, *hadiths*.

[55]Physical Education Training.

[56]Religious poetry.

help for nearly eight months. Nonetheless, as Nilufer's experience shows, girls who live at home are expected to help their mothers with housework and childcare before and after school. Yasmin's experiences reveal that girls who live at the hostel also have many responsiblities before and after school.

However, unlike their sisters, most boys in the village do not contribute much to the household and farming. As Yasmin describes,

> My brother...plays football. He has no work to do in the house. He only helps when it is time for ploughing and harvesting. I study at night...because I help more in the house with my mother. (field interview with Yasmin)

I observed this phenomenon each time I was walking or going to homes in the village in the afternoon or evening. Thus, the lives of young school girls tend to structure around their school and their household and agricultural tasks.

Roshan, a 23 year old mother with two children, shares how her life revolves around household, agricultural and paid employment responsibilities. She is a full-time teacher whose day also begins early in the morning:

> Early in the morning, I wake up for prayers; then I prepare breakfast for the household; then I get dressed and go to school; according to the timetable, I teach for about five hours. When I come back from the school, I have lunch which has already been prepared...by my father-in-law's daughter. Then I wash the household's clothes. After that, I go to collect fodder for the cows. Then I start to make dinner for the household. After dinner, I wash the utensils and prepare myself for the next day's lesson. (field interview with Roshan)

Roshan's experience provides two insights into village life. Firstly, with the transformation of the rural economy in Booni, employment opportunities have opened up to women thus taking them away from their full-time reproductive and productive roles. Therefore, other women in the household are required to take over responsibilities for the absent woman. The second insight given by Roshan's example is that women who participate in wage labour are still expected to carry out household and farming responsibilities.

Roshan's, Naseema's, Yasmin's and Nilufer's experiences reveal four different realities experienced by women in Booni. However, a common aspect revealed by their stories is the importance of religion in this culture. Naseema, Roshan, Yasmin

and Nilufer all talk about prayer as part of their daily life. Furthermore, Nilufer and Yasmin as well as Naseema's children all receive religious education regularly. Roshan and Yasmin are Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, who make up about 70% of the population in Booni. Ismaili girls attend religion school at the *Jamatkhana* with other girls and boys from the village. They have been receiving religious education since 1970 when religious centres started opening up at the *Jamatkhanas*. Before this, they learned how to read the *Holy Quran* at home from their mothers and fathers or from other people in the village. Boys and girls usually attend religion school daily for about two hours after school and learn *Du'a*[57] , *Qasidas*[58] ,religious history and the *Holy Quran* from religious guides. An *Al-waez*[59] comes to the hostel to teach the girls the *Holy Quran* and religious education so they do attend religion school at the *Jamatkhanas* in the village.

Naseema's and Nilufer's families are Sunni Muslim. Sunnis make up the remaining 30% of the population in Booni. Some Sunni girls, like Nilufer, go to a *Hafeez's*[60] or to a *Kazi's*[61] home daily to learn to read the *Holy Quran*. Some also learn from family members or women in the village who know how to read the *Holy Quran*. Sunni boys go to the *Masjid*[62] to learn the *Holy Quran* from the *Mullahs*[63]. Sunni women in Booni are generally not allowed to attend the *Masjid.*[64] In some communities in Pakistan, young Sunni girls do learn from the *Mullahs* at the *Masjid*, but once they are older they stay at home and learn from their parents, family members, or someone from the village comes home to teach them (Farah, 1992: 90).

Women like Naseema, who do go to the *Masjid*, pray at home while the men attend one of the nine *Masjids* in the village for prayers. Ismaili women, on the other hand, attend one of the thirteen *Jamatkhanas* in Booni. I often saw Ismaili women walking to the *Jamatkhana* at dusk for evening prayers. Thus Ismaili women tend to

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[57]Prayers; the daily prayer recited by Shia Ismailis is called *Du'a*.
[58]Religious hymns.
[59]An Arabic term referring to one who invites or summons others to the faith.
[60]As described previously, one who has memorized the *Holy Quran*.
[61]Legal scholar; one who is well-versed in Islamic law.
[62]Mosque; prayer house for Muslims; in Booni Valley, Sunni Muslims attend the *Masjid*.
[63]Religious scholar/teacher; in the context of Booni Valley (and in many other Muslim societies), *Mullahs* are associated primarily with the Sunni community.
[64]Women in the first Muslim community attended Mosque, listened to Prophet Muhammed's (P.B.U.H) discourses and expressed ideas and opinions about religion. Any restrictions in movement which ensued during the Prophet's (P.B.U.H) lifetime were based solely on women's safety as the mosque was a place of lively activity where the Prophet (P.B.U.H) conducted all his religious and community affairs. Current restrictions are based on interpretations which do not recognize the Prophet's (P.B.U.H) reaction to a specific socio-historical context. For a further discussion, see Mernissi (1991) and Ahmed (1992). In the Ismaili tradition, women and men both congregate together for prayers in the *Jamatkhana*.

have more contact with the wider community than Sunni women. Consequently, aside from those girls who attend school and leave the home to obtain religious education, Sunni women spend most of their time within the household. Pettifer (1994: 14) in his case study of village organizations in two sub-villages of Booni notes, "as a rule, the constraints of female modesty are more prohibitive for the Sunnis in the region than for their Ismaili neighbours."

Life for women in the valley revolves around religion, agriculture, the household, school and employment. However, the experiences of women in Booni Valley as told by Naseema, Nilufer, Yasmin and Roshan reveal a shift in cultural patterns, some of which have been illustrated earlier in this chapter. The transforming rural economy, the establishment of educational and healthcare institutions as well as the various development projects in the valley are playing a big role in this process. In the next chapter, I will focus specifically on schooling and the perceptions that girls and women of Booni Valley have of this institution in their lives today.

CHAPTER VI:

WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOLING

The Early Years

Learning Before Schooling

Prior to the middle of this century, much of the learning which took place in Booni Valley was related to agriculture, household maintenance and childcare. Young girls and boys learned from their elders those skills which were necessary for everyday survival. While young boys learned how to harvest, thresh, plough, water the crops, collect firewood and build houses, young girls learned how to cook, clean the house, look after children, collect fodder, graze and milk cattle, clean and weave wool, take care of vegetable gardens and weed crops. Young girls were also taught traditional ways of making clothes and household items including rugs and mattresses. Cultural values were also transmitted to the children by their parents and grandparents in extended families.

Acquiring religious knowledge was also an important part of children's learning. The value of the *Holy Quran* and the Islamic way of life was enculturated into the people right from childhood. Children learned about Islam through reading and decoding the *Holy Quran* as well as through oral memorization and transmission of the religious book. Recitation of *Quranic* verses took place daily in homes and the call for prayers was heard daily in the villages. People also spoke regularly about Prophet Muhammed (P.B.U.H) and his *hadiths*, sayings, and tried to live their lives by his example.[65]

Although religious, household and agricultural education continue to be important aspects of the culture, a new form of learning has been introduced to children in Booni. The knowledge transmitted through this form of learning is done in the formal institution of "school" which was established in Booni in the late 1940s for boys and the mid 1950s for girls. The presence of this institution is contributing to value shifts within the community as members make meaning of schooling in their lives. One of the most striking shifts is apparent in the people's perceptions of girls' schooling today compared to when it was initially introduced. This chapter will describe some of these perceptions and their evolution.

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[65]The Prophet's (P.B.U.H) values, beliefs, attitudes and religious and secular conduct are considered by all Muslims as an example by which to live their own lives.

School Comes to the Valley

For most of the women and men above the age of fifty in Booni Valley, the concept of schooling was not a part of their life when they were growing up. As Azada, a 35 year old school teacher, explains, "[most] people had no idea what school was and did not even know about the word "school." It [schooling] was not customary" (field interview). A few boys learned some math, Persian and Arabic from the Mosque schools when they went to learn the *Holy Quran.*

However, with the establishment of a boy's primary school in the late 1940s, schooling began to take on a defined role in community life. Families who could afford to pay for formal education started to send their sons to this school. The boys studied mainly from Persian primers like the *Gulistan* book. They also learned Arabic and received religious education at school. However, as Azada describes, most boys withdrew from school even before completing primary school due to financial constraints and a lack of resources:

> In that time, the boys used to learn the Gulistan....Mostly after the second or third year, the boys left school. They did not even have their own books. They might have wanted to study, but they did not have their own books. They could not afford their own books or the [books] were unavailable. (field interview)

The main reason boys went to school was because the community perceived schooling as the key to securing paid employment.[66] The cultural context called for men to provide financial support to their families. They also had freedom of mobility which made it easy for them to go out of the valley and the district, if necessary, to find employment. And, with schooling, it was thought that their chances of securing paid work would be even better.

Gender Structures: Girls are Excluded From the Schooling Process

Although Chitral District had not yet merged with the rest of Pakistan, the pattern of putting more effort towards the establishment of boys' schools rather than girls' schools was seen throughout Pakistan at this time. All Muslim women were expected to observe strict *purdah*, which meant women were required to spend most of their existence within the household and not to be in the company of men other than their immediate family. Women were thus expected to take care of duties within the

[66]These issues will be discussed in further detail in Chapter VII "Women's Perceptions of Schooling and Work."

household. In those times, *Quranic* education was the only form of "formal" education for girls; it was considered necessary and important for both women and men for *kiyamat*, salvation in the life hereafter. To enable women to learn without leaving the home, they could receive *Quranic* education from their parents or elders.[67]

The tradition of early marriage, sometimes as early as age five or six, was also a strong part of the culture. For most parents, it was important for their daughters to get married as the community did not look favorably upon single women and the family's reputation was usually at stake if their daughters remained unmarried. As soon as a suitable partner approached the girl's family, the marriage took place. My speculation is that early marriage of women also took place for two other reasons, both of which are closely related to the harsh living environment of the valley: the short life span of the local people and one less person in the family for whom to provide. The community's perceptions are summarized by Azada:

> The parents wanted the girls to stay at home. They taught them some *Quran* at home. And at the age of 12 or 14, they used to arrange their daughters' marriage.... (field interview)

Shifts in Gender Structures

Girls Attend Boys' School

A shift in cultural expectations of women took place as a few girls started to attend the boys' school. These girls came either from families where the father had some form of influence in the community, from high caste families or from families where a relative taught at the school or where a son also attended the school. These factors were important for the girls' physical and moral safety at school.

Usually the girls' fathers made the decisions to send them to school. Fathers sent their daughters because they strongly believed that their daughters could acquire knowledge at school which they could not learn at home. Most mothers were unaware about schooling for girls and had little, if any, voice in matters concerning their daughters' schooling. Gender structures within the community granted limited decision-making power to women and restricted their movement within the community. However, in my sample, one woman, Karima, joined the school on her own accord.

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[67]While girls' religious education occurred mainly within the household, boys had the freedom to attend the Mosque to learn religion or they learned it in the family. As previously explained, in many Muslim sects women do not traditionally attend Mosque.

She was curious to find out where her brother was going everday and began following him to school. Karima insisted on attending school despite her father's reluctance. Her example illustrates a shift from the tradition of girls unquestionably obeying their fathers' decisions.

Those girls who broke from tradition and started attending boys' school were mainly Shia Ismailis. This was a result of guidance from their spiritual leader, Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III and, subsequently, the current *Imam*[68], His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, to send daughters to school. As Fatima explains, "our *Imam* said to give education to girls so we started sending our daughters to school." Ismaili women appear to have been more aware of girls' schooling because of their contact with the *Jamatkhana*.[69] However, they too were limited in making decisions.

Community Values Threatened

The idea of girls attending school, particularly boys' school, caused much tension in the community. Most local people found it difficult to accept this break from tradition. They "thought it was bad for girls to go to boys' school" (field interview with Azada) because they perceived it as a threat to their religious beliefs. The community strongly believed it was against the teachings of Islam to send Muslim girls to school. Such notions were spread by the *Mullahs*[70] who preached to the men in the Mosques that women's schooling is against Islam.[71] These religious guides falsely advised the people against sending their daughters to boys' school because of the belief that the "Prophet (P.B.U.H) liked the *purdah* system"[72] (field interview with Sultana).

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[68]Religious leader/guide. In this context *Imam* refers to the spiritual leader of Shia Ismaili Muslims.
[69]As indicated earlier in Chapter V "Description of Research Site: Booni Valley", Shia Ismaili women have the freedom to attend *Jamatkhana*, but most Sunni women in Booni Valley are restricted from going to the *Masjid*.
[70]Religious scholars.
[71]Contrary to what these *Mullahs* preached, the acquisition of knowledge is revered and stressed both by Prophet Muhammed (P.B.U.H) and the *Holy Quran*. In one of his *hadiths*, sayings, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) mentions, "[t]o acquire knowledge is the duty of every Muslim man and woman."
[72]In this context, "the *purdah* system" refers to women's space being confined to the household. Because issues concerning purdah in Islamic cultures are quite complex, I will only touch on key points. Contrary to a belief which many Muslims and non-Muslims have, Prophet Muhammed (P.B.U.H), during his lifetime, strove for a society in which both women and men had equal rights and where individuals could be respected (Mernissi, 1991: 188). Women in the first Muslim community attended mosque, participated in community politics, fought during battles, listened to Prophet Muhammed's (P.B.U.H) discourses and expressed ideas and opinions about religion. The Prophet's (P.B.U.H) wives, 'A'isha and Umm Salama, also spoke for the liberation of women and women's right for freedom. Any restrictions in women's movements which ensued during the Prophet's (P.B.U.H) lifetime were based solely on their safety in the streets and were not based on religious teachings. Restrictions from the mosque were also based on their safety as this was a place of lively activity where the Prophet (P.B.U.H) conducted all his religious and community affairs. However, current

The *Mullahs* told the people that their daughters would become "shameless"[73] (field interview with Fatima) if they attended school with the boys. The men would then come home and share this information with the women in their households. The community became worried about their daughters coming into contact with male teachers and students who were not family members, and, as Azada explains, "the parents were afraid that once the girls would be able to read and write they would start sending love letters to the boys" (field interview).

The Ismaili Muslims encountered much opposition from members of the Sunni community and the *Mullahs* for sending their girls to school. They thought the Ismailis were violating the principles of Islam.[74] During conversations with local Ismaili women, I gathered that Sunni families often perceived the school-going Ismaili girls and their families as "shameless," and began to generalize this to the rest of the Ismaili community.[75] Consequently, many Ismaili families felt threatened by this pressure and were hesitant to send their daughters to school despite their *Imam's* guidance.

Hamida is a young Ismaili girl whose father sent her to school. The young boys at school would tease Hamida's brothers saying that they were "shameless" for bringing their sister to school. In a conversation that my mother and I had with Hamida she explains how her father ignored some of these pressures:

> Hamida used to go to [boys'] school with her elder brothers. The boys at school would tell her brothers that they were shameless for bringing their sister to school. Hamida's brothers went home and told their father that they did not want their sister to come with them because people were saying they were shameless. Her father told them "let the people worry about that - if you do not want to go to school you do not have to, but I will not stop sending your sister to school." (fieldnotes, conversation)

If a girl from an influential family[76] attended boys' school, the community generally refrained from hassling her family. Unlike Hamida, Azada and her family did not encounter any pressure from the community because of their prominence in the

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restrictions on women's movements are based on interpretations which do not recognize the Prophet's (P.B.U.H) reaction to a specific historical context. For a further discussion on this topic, see Mernissi (1991) and Ahmed (1992).

[73]"Shameless" in the sense of coming into contact with men who were not family members.

[74]Conflicts resulting from various religious interpretations are evident throughout most religions in the world (Mernissi, 1991).

[75]According to my sources and findings, I gathered that there were no Sunni girls who attended the boys' school; while this might not be exactly correct, the number of Sunni girls was not as high as the number of Ismaili girls in the schools.

[76]Usually families from the upper caste.

valley. Her parents were also not concerned about her safety because her uncle taught at the school and always walked with her to and from school. Azada's perceptions of the community's attitudes toward her family, herself and other girls at her school are, therefore, quite different from Hamida's views. Azada says,

> My mother was not worried [about me going to boys' school]....My mother's youngest brother , my relative, used to be a headmaster at that school....My father and mother told [him], "take care of our daughter; take care of her discipline, take care of her while she is going and coming from school"....[The other girls in my school also faced no problems]. In Chitral all people know one another and have good relations with the families. In Chitral, everyone treats each other very well.....We all think of the different children as our own children. (field interview)

The reference which Azada makes to her mother's awareness about school and her voice in the family indicates an altered gender structure in her family.

One woman, Shaida, describes that when she was attending boys' school in a hundred percent Ismaili village about three hours from Booni, the community did not oppose any of the girls who went to the boys' school or these girls' parents. She explains, "[w]e used to sit [and study with the boys]. It was an Ismaili community so there was no restriction of *purdah* and people did not say anything about girls studying with the boys" (field interview with Shaida).

Overall, the community's reactions toward girls' schooling is a suggestion of the people's fear of a disruption in the gender structure within their culture. Their perceptions indicate that traditions like arranged marriages and women not meeting with men they did not know were being threatened. The people's views also suggest that women's actions could not be trusted and that, if women were allowed to break free from tradition, they would behave inappropriately. The people's attitudes also point to varied interpretations of Islam and to conflicts which can result from such differences.

School Culture: Girls Share Their Experiences at Boys' School

Most girls who attended boys' school had no idea what school was because they were too young to understand. They only recall having to wear the same uniform as the boys, cut their hair short and carry a school bag. Once the girls started primary school, they were very happy to be there and had positive experiences. Hamida describes her experience:

> We were happy to go to school. We were learning. We felt good to have a school bag. We had to wear the boys' uniform and cut our hair. You know the Chitrali cap, we used to wear that also. (field notes, conversation)

Hamida's account illustrates that, although girls were permitted into the boys' school, they were expected to dress and to look like boys.

Unlike the elders in the community who were concerned about girls studying amongst boys, most girls, especially at the primary school level, were indifferent about learning with boys. Karima talks about how she felt to attend boys' school:

> I was happy. There was no reason to be unhappy....We did not even know anything about boys and love. We never felt ashamed or embarrassed. It was the parents who felt that way. We were innocent. (field notes, conversation)

Karima vividly recalls that the behaviour which the school expected from the boys and girls did not even allow for much interaction between the two genders. For example, boys and girls were not allowed to sit next to each other during class time. This is illustrated in Karima's anecdote of her experience at boys' school:

> All the girls sat in front. The boys sat behind and on the side. Girls sat in the first bench and the boys sat behind [the girls]; [girls sat] in front of the teachers. (field notes, conversation)

Karima's description of the gender segregation at school and Hamida's earlier description of girls being molded to look like boys suggest that the culture of school was still perceived as one for boys.

Once girls reached middle and high school, however, their perceptions of studying with boys changed. Most girls were uncomfortable to study with boys because they were more conscious of gender relationships in their culture. Some girls also perceived their respectability to be at stake. Although most girls say that their teachers encouraged them to come to the front of the class and ask questions, the girls did not have much confidence to respond to questions in the presence of boys. My speculation is that gender segregation within the household and the community after puberty had an impact on the girls' discomfort in boys' middle and high schools.

Most girls were afraid to tell their fathers about their discomfort in boys' school because it is considered disrespectful in their culture to voice any concerns to elders

who have made certain decisions. Their mothers could not say anything because fathers had the decision making power. Even if mothers did say something, their voice would not hold much weight in light of their husbands' decisions. These family and gender relationships are described by Azada, one of the three girls in her class to finish class 10 -- the final level of secondary school -- at boys' school:

> In class 8, it was this way -- we wanted to pass *matric* quickly so that we could be relieved from going to school with the boys....I did not feel like going to boys' school. It was difficult to go to boys' school. We felt embarrassed with the [boys] sitting in front of us. We did not speak with confidence at the boys' school....For so many years to sit amongst strange people and to try and maintain my *izat*[77] was hard....To go to boys' school was the only way out. My hands were tied. My father admitted me by force into the boys' school. I could not say anything to him. We respect our elders and we do not say anything in front of them. Poor mother could not say anything. In front of father she loses. (field interview)

The experiences shared by Karima and Azada, thus, illustrate some conflicts and similarities between the community's perceptions and the realities of girls' experiences at boys' school.

A Girl's Primary School is Established

Girls Have Mixed Feelings; the Community Has Mixed Feelings

When the girls' primary school was established in 1964, a ripple effect took place in the community as more and more girls began to attend school. For many of these girls, however, the transition from a traditional lifestyle to the culture of school was difficult. Through cultural networking, awareness about schooling had increased and some girls were frightened by the stories which they had heard from their friends. They were afraid to go to school because they had been informed that teachers physically punish students. Other girls did not want to leave their mothers. Some girls wanted to stay at home to play and to graze cattle with their friends because most of their friends were not allowed to go to school. When Azada's father enrolled her in school, she wanted to stay at home with her friends. She explains,

> In the times when I was admitted to school, we were only 2 girls out of 20 households going to the school. The rest [of the girls] were all

[77]Respectability.

> taking care of goats....They used to stay at home and play with dolls....I was not happy to go to school. I was compelled to go out of fear of my father. He was happy, but I went because I was forced to. I used to go unhappily to school. I wanted to stay at home and graze cattle and play with my friends. (field interview with Azada)

Once again, most of these students were Ismaili; their parents were now less concerned about the family's reputation since their daughters could study in a culturally appropriate environment. Shora's father is an Ismaili man who had refused to send Shora to boys' school because he did not want his daughter to study with the boys. However, he changed his mind about sending her younger sisters to school after the girls' school was opened and "after he saw many [other Ismaili families] in the village sending their daughters to school" (field interview with Shora). This ripple effect also extended to some Sunni families who began to enrol their daughters in the school. Zarina, my research collaborator, explained to me that, "after observing Ismaili girls going to school and progressing...Sunni families started to send their daughters to school [as well]" (fieldnotes, conversation).

Although an increased number of girls were going to school, the retention rates for these girls were very low. *Purdah* was a contributing factor to this phenomenon, particularly when the girls had reached puberty. For example, parents were concerned about their daughters walking to school alone or passing through the *bazaar*. Many girls also left school after class five because there was no girls' middle or high school. Parents were still worried about their daughters studying with the boys. They were also concerned about their daughters playing with the boys and learning games like football which were considered "boys' activities." Shora's younger sister went to the boys' school after class five. Shora explains that her sister left this school after class six "because of co-education" (field interview). Shora further adds, "my younger sister used to play football at school with the boys. That is why my parents took her out" (field interview). Early marriage also affected the continuation rates of girls in school. Once a suitable boy was found for their daughters, parents removed them from school to get married.

Many girls also remained at home because of financial constraints. Although formal education was free, parents had the financial burden of paying for items like uniforms and books. While some parents could not afford to send any of their children to school, others, who were only able to send one or two children, sent their sons. They felt that the opportunity cost of sending their daughters to school was too high because, culturally, sons were valued as the financial supporters of a family. Once a

daughter was married, she was no longer considered to be a part of her parents' household. Consequently, parents thought that educating their daughters would only benefit their daughters and, ultimately, their daughters' husbands and in-laws. Therefore, providing a daughter with formal education was not considered important. This favoring of sons over daughters is summarized by Sakeena, a 45 year old woman, who shares why her husband and she chose to send their sons instead of their daughters to school:

> My daughters had to go to another family; the boys are our own so it was better for us that they went to school. The girl will go to another's home and can at least get food and clothes from her husband. The son has to run the family [by implication, Sakeena's family]....Food and clothes are provided by the sons....Therefore, I sent him to school. (field interview)

Despite the fact that there was now a girls' school in the community, many families were still reluctant to shift from tradition and send their daughters to the girls' school. According to Fatima, many parents "did not know the value of education...they only paid attention to household work and to collecting fodder for the cattle" (field interview). Schooling for women was basically seen as "useless" (field interview with Fatima) because "at that time, [the community] felt that girls should sew, knit, make caps, *kalins*[78] and long gowns [winter coats]" (field interview with Shora). In some homes, mothers had no one else to help them so their daughters were expected to stay at home and work. Religion, the tradition of early marriage, gender expectations and financial constraints thus continued to work against the girls.

Women Go to the "Down District" to Study: the Community Resists

When some of the women started going away to the "down district", other areas of Pakistan, for higher studies after completing their matriculation in Booni, they met with a lot of resistance from the community. Women like Fatima, who were opposed to women leaving the valley, view their resistance as a product of their own realities of having never been to school. Recalling two women who went to Karachi for further studies after completing their education at boys' schools in Chitral, Fatima says, "[i]n the olden days, I remember two women who went to Karachi for their studies. We did not like that training because at that time we were illiterate...[we] did not understand the

[78]As previously described, kalins are local carpets

value of female education" (field interview). Thus the idea of women leaving the valley was viewed negatively by the community.

The Current Situation

Positive Perceptions of School: Daughters Speak

One of Roshan's most memorable experiences of school is the day her teachers selected her to request the education minister of the North West Frontier Province that a girl's high school be opened in Booni Valley. This was important for her not only because she had the opportunity to be in the presence of a distinguished person, the Minister of Education, but because it also marked the end of girls having to attend boys' high school. As mentioned previously in this chapter, although some parents sent their daughters to the boys' school, they did it with hesitance and many girls themselves felt awkward, shy and uncomfortable studying in the presence of strange boys. Roshan explains:

> After I finished class 5, the girls' middle school was ready so I attended it. After I completed middle school, I went to our *Wazir* [Minister of Education] and, with my hands, together [I] personally made him a humble request. He came to our Rest House and the school teachers sent four girls, including myself, to request that our school be given the status of a high school so that girls could do their high school in a girls' school because we find it difficult to go to boys' school. (field interview)

Since that day in 1982, girls' access to high school in Booni Valley has increased and previous concerns of girls' attending boys' school are no longer an issue.

The opening of the Aga Khan Hostel in 1989 also increased access to school for those girls who come from villages where girls' high schools have not yet been established; where the issue of girls attending boys' school is still sensitive for many people; and where coaching centres do not present an attractive alternative to learn. The motivation for most of these girls to perform well in their middle school exams is to meet the academic criteria required for securing a place at the hostel and, thereby, attending the girls' high school in Booni. Umah, who lives at the hostel, faced this situation during middle school. There is no girls' high school in her village and her parents did not want her to go to the boys' high school. They were concerned about her safety because the boys' in her village are not well mannered. Her parents were also worried because the community is quite particular about male and female space, and has negative views about girls attending boys' school. Umah did not want to study at the boys' school either. She studied very hard and is very happy that her

achievements have enabled her to live at the hostel and to study at a girls' school. She explains,

> Some girls in my village went to boys' school after middle school. I came to Booni Hostel....I would not have liked to go to [a] boys' school. The number of boys in the classrooms is much higher than the number of girls. There are fifty boys, but only seven or eight girls in a class. I do not like boys and girls sitting together for studies. In my area the boys are not good, they are rough. I studied very hard so that I could come to the hostel. (field interview with Umah)

Thus issues concerning girls studying with boys which were sensitive before in Booni Valley are still present in other villages.

Positive Perceptions of School: Mothers Speak

Today, the community's perceptions towards girls' schooling have also drastically shifted. The local people have great value for this institution which now plays a major role in their children's learning. Nearly all parents in the village send their daughters to school today, and, unlike the past, a family's reputation is now at stake if they do not send their daughters to school. In light of this, Shora says that "nowadays, everyone is getting education. If I am able to afford it, I will send each and every child [of mine] to school. I do not want to keep them at home" (field interview). While I was in the valley, many women would tell me how badly they feel about the few families who continue to deny their daughters the opportunity to go to school.

A Sense of Regret: Mothers' and Daughters' Thoughts on Schooling

Nowadays, the women of the older generation feel sorry that they were never given the opportunity to go to school. They believe that not having received formal education has hindered them from developing literacy skills, getting paid employment and acquiring knowledge. Those women whose daughters did not go to school during the initial stages of girls' schooling also have much regret. Sultana, who did not send her daughters to school, expresses this regret.

> I did not know what schooling was for girls at that time. At that time, I thought that *Quranic* education was enough for my girls. I did not have any sense about the value of girls schooling....Today they have remained illiterate and I feel very bad. (field interview)

These daughters also feel sorry that their parents did not send them to school. Shahnaz's elder sister, Zaheeda, who is about 29 years old, did not go to school because school was not common in her time. Her mother had no one to help her at home either so Zaheeda had to stay home. Shahnaz shares how her elder sister feels today when she sees other women going to school.

> My eldest sister has not been to school. She did not go to school because it was not common during her time. There was a school, but there was no one at home to help my mother so she did not go to school. She feels very bad because she sees all the other girls around her who have been to school and who are going to school. (field interview)

Mothers' Sacrifices and Initiatives to Send Daughters to School

A result of the emphasis placed on schooling is that the community has negative perceptions about persons with no schooling. Moreover, people with no schooling do not have a positive self image. The women in the sample view themselves as "backward," "illiterate" and "animal-like," and often express statements, such as "I am a dumb person, I cannot think," whenever they compare themselves to young women of this generation with schooling. Women with no schooling want their daughters to get formal education so that they will not be viewed in this manner.

Naseema never had the opportunity to go to school. There was no school in her parents' village and she got married before her baby teeth even fell out. She compares her life to the type of life she wants her daughters to have and says she will make any sacrifice so that her daughters can get schooling:

> I have never gone to school; there is no difference between me and an animal. I do not want my daughters to remain illiterate....I send my daughters to school so that they can get education. Whatever trouble I have to carry, even in the future, I will never ask them to leave school. (field interview with Naseema)

Like Naseema, most mothers in the valley share this sense of responsibility to send their daughters to school. Unlike the past when many mothers did not want their daughters to go to school because they needed their help at home, mothers today are sacrificing this help so that their daughters can get formal education. In some instances, widows, like Sultana, have even sold their animals, which comprise a large

part of or sometimes their only income base, to send their daughters to school: "*Allah*[79] is responsible for a person's *risaq*[80]. *Allah* helped me to give my daughters education....I used to sell my goats and chickens. In this way I was able to give my daughter education" (field interview with Sultana). From this interview, the sacrifice which women make to educate their daughters is apparent and, what is also interesting, is the emphasis the women put on the will of *Allah* to guide their destiny.

A shift is also apparent at the household level as mothers are taking more interest in encouraging their daughters to go to school, a role which was previously held by men. Shahnaz's experience illustrates an example of this gender shift. Shahnaz did not like going to school and would often cry because she wanted to stay at home with her mother. However, her mother used to encourage and advise her to go to school:

> While I was in primary school, I used to go crying sometimes....I used to tell my mother that I did not want to go to school....On the days when I did not want to go someone used to take me; they used to carry me by force. It was mostly my mother who took me. My mother used to tell me not to follow her. She used to force me to go to school because she [felt] that for the coming years, it would be useful for me to go to school. (field interview with Shahnaz)

School Culture Today

Typical Day at School

It is 6:45 a.m. in October and about 48 young women are lined up at the back gate of the Aga Khan Hostel ready to leave for the Girls Government High School (GGHS), Booni, which is about a 15 minute walk from the hostel. These young women, who have come to live at the hostel so that they can attend high school, are amongst 800 other girls in the village who are also getting ready to go to school.[81] The girls have come to the hostel because they are not keen about going to boys' school in their villages, attending coaching centres which provide an alternative to formal schooling or learning through distance education from home. Furthermore, they do not

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[79]God.

[80]Refers to a person's destiny.

[81]As explained in Chapter V "Description of Research Site: Booni Valley", most of the girls living in Booni valley and in surrounding villages attend the government primary and high schools for girls. Approximately 135 girls attend the Aga Khan School and later transfer to the GGHS, about 12 girls go to the Pamir Public School and a few girls attend the Terichmere Public School.

want to get married at an early age like many of their friends, whose parents cannot afford to send them to live at the hostel, are compelled to do.

The hostel residents are wearing their freshly washed and ironed blue and white uniforms and their hair is pulled neatly back. Some of them are also wearing red sweaters, which are part of the uniform, to shield themselves from the chilly morning wind. The days are getting shorter as winter approaches the valley. Soon the girls will start leaving for school later because the school building is not equipped with heating resources.

The girls are waiting for Akber, the hostel gardener, to walk with them to the school. Divisions of space for men and women in the valley make it generally unacceptable for young women like these girls to walk unaccompanied in the village. In Booni, the school and the route between the school and the home have come to be accepted by most of the community as a space where women may enter. However, perhaps because some girls do not have to pass through the *bazaar*, the main street of town which the villagers recognize as men's domain, it is not uncommon to see girls walking to school alone or in groups without male accompaniment. The hostel girls do not have to pass through the *bazaar*. Many of their peers in the village must leave for school earlier in the morning as they have to take a detour to avoid walking through the main street of town. Once the girls reach school, Akber leaves them at the gate and returns to the hostel. The girls enter the gate into the school compound which is surrounded by a high wall shielding the world of the community from the activities of school life. Most men in the village have never gone past the main gate into the school which is a private space for women to come together and learn.

Within the compound, the school has a primary and high school section. The buildings are permanent fixtures, unlike those of the past which were made out of mud. Although the primary school was recently renovated during the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, the school still remains roofless. Consequently, most of the primary school girls sit outside on the verandah during class time. It is believed in the village that funds which were reserved for the school during Sharif's regime have been transferred to other projects started by the government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto after the collapse of the Sharif government. In the high school section, many girls also sit on the verandah as the classrooms cannot accommodate the high enrolment of girls in class 9 and 10. Students either sit on *tats*, straw mats, in the classrooms or squeeze onto benches as furniture has not been adequately provided for by the government.

The high school also has a staff room which is equipped with cabinets that have been tilted against the wall to protect fragile items, such as recently arrived lab equipment, from breaking in case of an earthquake. There are a few long tables in the staff room, of which one is the headmistress's desk and the other is the clerk's desk. The room also has a typewriter, a telephone and cabinets which hold library books[82]. As the school has no laboratory, the science equipment is hardly ever used to teach practical skills. During the autumn months, some teachers instruct in the small courtyard because their classrooms do not get warmed by the sun. In the winter months, the girls are each expected to bring a stick of firewood to burn in the small fireplaces located in one corner of each classroom and in the staffroom as the school does not receive sufficient funds from the government to buy firewood for heating the buildings.[83]

The school day begins with a 15 minute assembly which includes singing the national anthem. Once a week, the teachers conduct a uniform and hygiene check. Girls whose hygiene, appearance or clothing is not considered acceptable are scolded or physically punished. After assembly the girls go to their classrooms for *Qirate*, the recitation of the *Holy Quran*, and then commence their daily secular subjects which are generally taught in Urdu. While most girls pursue the humanities route[84], some girls have opted to study science which was introduced in the school about two years ago. The girls in humanities are required to take Math, English, Urdu, General Science, Social Studies (Pakistan History), *Islamiat Lazmi*, *Islamiat Ikthiari*, *Mubadiat*[85]. Physical education training or P.E.T. is also part of the curriculum. Those girls studying science are exempt from *Islamiat Ikthiari* and General Science and, instead, take Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.

Today I have an appointment with the high school headmistress. I am seated on the verandah talking with her. It is a very cold morning and the girls from one of the classes are seated in a horseshoe in the courtyard, facing the slightly elevated verandah. These girls are engaged in a number of activities. Some girls are whispering to each other, others are silently reading their books and a few are looking around them moving their lips as though murmuring something. Their teacher is seated in front of them on the verandah taking care of her young child and knitting a sweater. Some other teachers are also sitting on the verandah, looking after their infants and talking. Once in

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[82]Most students have not seen these books and some are unaware that such books exist.
[83]These phenomena appear not to be particular to Booni, but to be widespread throughout the district and country.
[84]The humanities route is referred to locally as the arts route.
[85]Home Economics

awhile a young child runs past the girls seated in the courtyard and each time a teacher walks by to pick up the child, all the girls stand up and then sit down to resume their activities. A few school girls are also taking care of the teachers' children.

Across the courtyard, many girls are seated on another verandah. They are crammed together at the benches and tables and are repeating after their teacher, who is standing in front of them. In one of the classrooms the girls are sitting alone because their teacher has not come to the school. Some of these girls are reading from their books and chanting softly to memorize their lessons. Another group of girls is learning how to knit and do embroidery from each other.[86]

After the first three periods of the day, the students have a 10 minute recess break. During recess, many primary school girls leave the school compound to drink water from the nearby channel, to go to the bathroom or to play in neighbouring fields. Girls from class six onwards are not allowed to go outside because they have grown up and, culturally, it is not appropriate for them to enter this public space. They either do schoolwork, talk or teach each other how to knit and do embroidery.

After awhile, I walk over to the primary school section where I observe similar scenes. In one of the classes, the teacher is seated to the side talking to her colleague while her young student is instructing the class. This student is reading a poem aloud and walking amongst her peers who are repeating the lines of this poem after her. From my observations and discussions with local women, the behaviour of and personal interactions between the students and teachers as well as the methods of learning which I have just described appear to be everyday occurences in the government girls' schools in Booni Valley.

When the school day ends at around 1 p.m., the girls return home, following their usual paths, either alone, in groups or accompanied like the hostel girls.

Mothers and Daughters Reflect on Girls' School

Mothers and daughters in Booni Valley have come to place extreme value on schooling. Young women of this generation speak enthusiastically about acquiring knowledge from school and are keen on being a part of this learning process. However, the expectations which most women, particularly school-going girls, have of schooling often come into conflict with the school culture. Girls also continue to face various challenges and obstacles within the community which affect their schooling

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[86]When teachers are absent, girls' use this time to learn how to knit and do embroidery from each other. Many of their mothers think that they learn these handicraft skills from the formal school curriculum.

experiences. The experiences which young women have at school and the larger community values which affectgirls' formal education will be discussed in the next section. Furthermore, the way in which young women's experiences come into conflict with their expectations and with their mothers' expectations of schooling are also described.

Unfulfilled Schooling Experiences

Improved access, an environment unable to cope

Most women in Booni consider themselves fortunate to have access to two girls' primary schools and a girls' high school. Although the availability of these institutions has increased girls' participation rates in school, it is also becoming increasingly difficult to accommodate the number of girls who want to attend these schools, particularly in the government institutions. Many girls perceive these high enrolment rates to be a deterrent to their learning. Some girls think that the teachers are unable to teach effectively because there is too little space in the school for them to move about. The teacher - student ratio is also inadequate; there are not enough teachers for the number of students enrolled in the school. This staff shortage is illustrated in one woman's experience of school: "When I was in school, there were not enough teachers in the school and there was too little space in the school. Because of [this lack of] space, they were not able to teach properly" (field interview with Aisha).

Other girls complain that they are unable to hear the teacher clearly because there are too many students. Moreover, they do not have a very clear view of what the teacher has written on the chalkboard because they have to sit too far away. Girls who have previously attended the Aga Khan Schools, however, found that they were better able to learn in these schools because the enrolment rates were not as high and they could see the chalkboards clearly. They also found that they could see the Aga Khan School chalkboards better because they were cleaner. High enrolment rates, particularly at the government schools, have resulted in many girls having unfulfilled schooling experiences.

Perceptions of teachers' involvement in government schools[87]

For the women in Booni Valley, teachers' involvement in the schooling process presents an important part of their experiences. In instances when teachers instruct regularly, respect the students and put in energy and effort to teach their students, the girls have positive experiences and feel they have accomplished much from their classes. Thus Aisha speaks about a positive experience with her Urdu teacher at the government school, "I liked Urdu because my teacher was good and explained things well. She always used to tell us to study well and to do our work" (field interview).

However, a global picture of the women's perceptions indicates that most girls are disappointed with their teachers' involvement in the girls' schooling experiences. Mothers and daughters in Booni are quite concerned about the high rate of teacher absenteeism which has resulted in much frustration and disappointment for many students. The students are also discouraged because, even though some of their teachers are present at the school, they do not physically come inside the classrooms to instruct. Most girls think it is useless for them to go to school when they are only taught two lessons a day out of the eight outlined in the curriculum. According to the students, their teachers either socialize with their colleagues, make clothes or knit during their scheduled time of instruction. Some teachers are also preoccupied with their infants, either because the children are nursing or because their in-laws do not have time to take care of them at home. Some students also experience frustration because they are expected to look after their teachers' children. These students feel that it defeats their purpose of going to school to learn. Yasmin shares her discontentment and frustration about teacher absenteeism:

> Not all the teachers come to the class to teach. If they come to class then they do not teach. We [are scheduled to] learn eight subjects everyday. Each class has a separate teacher, but only two to three teachers come into the class each day and teach....Most come to school, but they bring their children and sit with them away from the class. They pay no attention to teaching. Sometimes they ask us to look after their children so we do not learn anything in the class. (field interview)

[87]Teachers' perceptions are not presented in this study. However, it is recognized that the life of teachers is very difficult in these settings. Therefore, further research should be undertaken.

One of Yasmin's peers, Faranaz, said that if she did not have to pay 5 Rupees[88], which the girls are required to pay each day they are absent, she would not go to school. Faranaz said she would rather get private tuition and work by herself at home.

Many mothers are also concerned about the teachers not instructing enough at school and attribute this to weak teaching methods. Their thoughts on schooling are based on their daughters' experiences at school. Shora is a concerned mother who shares her thoughts about the teachers not instructing enough at school. She says,

> The teaching is weak. My daughter used to tell me that the teachers do not teach. They just stand in front of the class and read a bit and then they leave.....They do not teach well; they do whatever they want in school. Whenever they want to teach, they teach; whenever they don't want to teach, they don't. (field interview with Shora)

Mothers feel that a child who only completed class 3 education when school was first established in the valley is more "able" than a child who completes class 8 education today. These mothers usually speak to this issue in reference to the men and compare their daughters' abilities to the abilities of male students from the past. These comparisons also suggest that the education received in boys' school might be of better quality than in girls' school.[89]

Many young girls attribute the incompletion of their course work to the high rate of teacher absenteeism. Subsequently, these students cheat during exams. Although most girls are ashamed to cheat, and were often hesitant to admit in the interviews that they cheat, they are caught in a culture which now demands high academic performance in order to "progress." Most students resort to cheating if necessary so that they do not miss out on higher learning and paid employment opportunities.[90] Sometimes, cheating is also encouraged by the teachers so that the school name and the teachers are

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[88]Rupees (Rs.) is the local currency. During the period (Aug. - Oct. 1994) when this research was conducted, one Canadian dollar was equivalent to approximately 25 Pakistani Rupees.

[89]A study which explores boys' experiences and perceptions of school would provide a holistic picture of gender schooling experiences in Booni Valley.

[90]Cheating is particularly an issue during centralized government exams such as the Senior School Certificate (SSC) exams. The "semester" exams which are made up by the teachers include only the material which students have covered in class so students generally do not find these exams very difficult. During the government exams, students are not well-prepared because the exams include all material for a particular class level and many girls are unable to complete this work in school. This problem is not only particular to girls' school, but to schools throughout the country. According to many people in the community, this problem has worsened since the introduction of guidebooks from which students cheat. Issues concerning cheating as they relate to competition for paid employment will be discussed in further detail in Chapter VII "Women's Perceptions of Schooling and Work."

recognized if the girls do well. Some students are also urged to cheat by their parents so that their family name is honored.

Perceptions of teachers' involvement in other schools

The women often compare the quality of teaching at the government school to the Aga Khan School or to the Pamir School and seem to generally have more positive views about the latter two institutions. Girls who have attended both the Aga Khan and government schools think that Aga Khan School teachers are more dedicated and hard working and this, in turn, is an encouragement for students to work hard. Furthermore, at the Aga Khan School, the girls feel that their work is recognized more by the teachers who reward the students for their academic performance. The girls' parents are invited to the school for prize distributions, something which rarely, if ever, done at the government schools. Yasmin speaks of her experience at an Aga Khan School before transferring to the girls' government school:

> When I was at the Aga Khan School, my teachers never wasted their periods. There was no time [for us] to talk, that is how much they taught us. Our teachers used to encourage us. They taught us with interest and they worked hard. When we had exams, [our teachers] used to give out prizes. They used to say, "well done." We used to like [this] very much and we used to work hard with a full heart. When the results were out, our parents [usually only fathers attend] used to be invited for a prize distribution.
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> We do not enjoy school as much [any more]. The teachers in the government school do not work with us as they do at the Aga Khan Schools....The teachers do not teach us well. If they did then maybe we would have been able to learn better than we are presently learning.... We go to [school and] just sit in class....In spite of this we still go to school because we have worked hard to pass class 8. Now we want to do class 9 and 10 to get education and not waste the efforts which we put up to class 8 for our parents' service and more education. (field interview)

After students transfer to the government school, they no longer experience the same sense of motivation to work because they find that their teachers are not putting in as much effort to teach them, to communicate with parents or to recognize the students' efforts and achievements.

Many mothers also think that the quality of education is better at the Aga Khan School. Sultana shares her thoughts based on observations of her daughter's experience at the Aga Khan and government schools:

> For getting education, it is better to go to the Aga Khan School. When my daughter used to come home [from the Aga Khan School], she [would] study and work hard. When she went to government school, this changed. She used to work less. She used to tell me that the teachers did not put a lot of emphasis on their work and that they did not teach well. In the beginning she did not feel good about going to the government school. (field interview)

One mother, Shora, compares teacher absenteeism at the government and Pamir schools. She thinks that there is less teacher absenteeism at the Pamir School because foreign teachers instruct at this school. According to Shora, foreign teachers only remain away from school during their holidays. Furthermore, she thinks the foreign teachers work harder than teachers at the government school who are all local people. She shares her perceptions.

> Pamir school is good [compared to the government school]....There are foreign teachers there and they are better. They work harder in school; they do not stay at home; they only stay at home during vacations. (field interview with Shora)

Like Shora, most local people place very high value on foreign teachers and often perceive them as perfect people with a good work ethic, all the right answers, valuable skills and knowledge, and who can lead the local people to the road of "progress."

Perceptions of teachers' knowledge

Most girls place high value on a teacher's knowledge of a particular subject matter. A teacher's familiarity with a certain discipline means a fulfilled and positive schooling experience for students. The majority of girls have had favorable experiences learning languages, particularly Urdu, and religion because their teachers' knowledge in these subject areas is very good.

However, girls feel discouraged when they study subjects like math and English because their teachers knowledge of these subjects is limited and, therefore, they do not teach with much enthusiasm and often do not complete the course material in time for exams. Most girls find math very difficult and usually have to get tutored in this subject.

Teaching methods and learning styles

The teaching methods and learning styles used in the schools also impact on the girls' schooling experiences. Rote learning, memorization and cramming are practiced widely by the students and, according to one woman in the community, this process of learning has not changed much since schooling was first established in the valley.

Right from primary school, young girls are exposed to teaching methods where, as Shahnaz describes, "the teachers...read to [the students]...and [the students] repeat after her" (field interview). This method is later adopted by the young girls who internalize and start employing similar techniques. As I previously described, during one of my visits to the Government Girls' Primary School, I observed a young student acting as the teacher and reading a poem aloud to her peers who were repeating the lines after her.

The pattern of reading and repeating is then carried on into higher classes. In higher classes, teachers also write the answers to questions from the text on the board and the students copy these down. In some cases, the teachers lecture the students and expect them to listen without any dialogue. Rubina thus explains, "in secondary school, we did not say anything; we were supposed to keep quiet. The teachers used to lecture us only. We were only supposed to listen" (field interview). The teachers also encourage the girls to cram the course material so that they are better prepared for their exams. Roshan explains, "[w]hen I was going to school, the way of teaching was not good. Most of the teachers were untrained. They just used to ask us to cram from the books" (field interview).

When the girls study on their own they memorize their course material by chanting their work aloud. This method of learning is used for all their subjects and is adopted at a young age. Very often the girls do not even look at their text, but move their lips and look everywhere around them. I experienced this method of learning everyday at the hostel as each of forty-nine girls chanted a different subject matter during their study period. However, I recall two instances during my stay when there was complete silence during the girls' study time. Zarina explained that she often encourages the girls to read quietly and try to understand what they are studying. These moments of quiet learning did not last long as the girls found it extremely difficult to break from the pattern of cramming which they have acquired from childhood.

Although girls view rote learning, memorization and cramming as meaningless and ineffective ways to learn, they find it necessary to adopt such methods so that they can perform well on their exams. Because their teachers do not instruct effectively, the

girls resort to cramming their course material. During the exams, the girls are also expected to provide answers which come word for word from their textbooks. Some girls note that, after writing their exams, they usually forget much of what they learned.

From my observations, it appears that there is some continuity from traditional to modern ways of learning. Students at school and at the hostel memorize and chant their course material in a rhythmic fashion in much the same way I observed and heard girls at the hostel reading the *Holy Quran*. While these methods of learning may be valuable for *Quranic* education, they appear to be ineffective to acquire secular knowledge.

Teacher preparation: an unmeaningful experience

Teachers' limited knowledge in certain subject areas and poor teaching methods appear to stem from two factors. Firstly, a cycle is evident whereby the teachers themselves have learned very little about subjects like math and English when they were in school. My speculation is that subjects like Urdu and religion are also easier for the teachers to instruct because they have learned religion all their lives and all the subjects at school are taught in the country's official language, Urdu. Secondly, most teachers do not have any meaningful teacher preparation.[91] Most teachers begin instructing after completing higher secondary school and/or a B.A. degree through distance education without receiving any practical teacher preparation in a classroom.[92] Consequently, the

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[91]Overall, the percentage of teachers with practical teacher training is low in the entire Chitral district. Until the mid-1980s, there was no practical teacher preparation available in the district. Women and men who wanted to train as teachers had to go to Lahore, Peshawar, Islamabad or Karachi. For most women this form of training was and continues to be impossible because *purdah*, financial constraints, marriage and parental decisions restrict most girls from leaving the valley. Many of these women began teaching directly upon completion of their matriculation or after they had completed higher secondary education through distance learning. In 1988, AKES, P established the Field Based Teacher Development Programme (FBTDP) to train teachers in their home villages. Under this program, two Aga Khan Schools and two Government Primary Schools each year are selected to function as a training base and teachers of these schools are provided with training under the supervision of qualified Master Trainers. This training prepares teachers for teaching techniques and methodologies, testing and diagnosis, class room management and child psychology and improves their knowledge of subject content. At the end of one year's training programme, teachers take the PTC (Primary Teaching Certificate) examination. Currently, 137 teachers from the Aga Khan Schools and 100 from the Government schools have completed primary teacher training under this program (the distribution of female and male participants in this program is unavailable). In 1992, the course was extended to include the middle school teachers. In order to sustain the benefits and quality of this training, after the completion of one year's program, Refresher Training Courses (RTC) are held each year during school vacations with different themes and topics. Although, this program has been set-up, there are still many teachers who have limited practical teacher preparation. A study of the teachers' perceptions of their training experiences, either through distance learning, an insitution outside the district or the FBTDP, would lead to a better understanding of these training programs and their usefulness to prepare local teachers, particularly female teachers.

[92]With "qualifications inflation", it is mainly those teachers with post-matriculate education who are hired today.

teachers repeat the practices of their own teachers by using similar teaching methods and encouraging students to study as they did.

Gender structures: administration at girls' schools

Some women in the community, particularly those women with schooling, perceive adminstrative support as a factor in the teachers' performance at school. Many of these women think that the main reason teachers are more effective and hard working at the Aga Khan Schools is because the administrative staff of the Aga Khan Education Service visit the schools on a regular basis. The teachers are motivated to teach because they are given guidance on how to instruct. As Azada describes,

> ...at the Aga Khan Schools, no matter what the weather [summer or winter] or the time, the teachers have to be prepared because the supervisors [administrative staff] can come at any time and the teachers have to remain prepared....They prepare lessons plans....[T]here is always someone who comes for supervision so the teachers always prepare themselves and keep their lessons ready for teaching. This does not happen at the government school. It can even be that in five years a school will have had no visits from a supervisor. (field interview)

I also think that the teachers at the Aga Khan school, who are mainly Ismaili, are more committed to their work because of their bond to His Highness the Aga Khan, their spiritual leader.

A major problem at the government schools is the missing link between the school and the administrative sector of the government. There are a number of interrelated issues which make this a very complex matter. The amount of human resource at the administrative level, particularly women, is very low. It appears that the administration is also indifferent towards the well-being of the government schools. For example, district education officers rarely visit the schools more than once every year or two.

During the period of my study, there was only one woman in the whole district who was employed by the government as a district education officer for girls' primary schools. She is based in Chitral town and it is virtually impossible for her to visit all the schools in her district because her mobility is restricted by *purdah*. Women's restricted mobility hinders most of them from applying for such positions. Furthermore, many women are not qualified for positions at the administrative level because gender expectations and the current education system streamline women into positions below this level. Women from the "down district" are also unwilling to take

up these postions; they too are restricted by *purdah*, and the climate, geography and rural conditions of the district do not appeal to them.

Because most female staff, particularly at the government schools, practice *purdah*, it is difficult for male district education officers to visit the girls' government school on a regular basis. The presence of male administrative staff of the AKES, P is not as problematic at the Aga Khan Schools because the female staff is all Ismaili and they are less strict about *purdah* than Sunni women.

Subject choices

For many girls, the choice of subject matter determines how meaningful their experiences are at school. Compared to boys in the valley, girls have been disadvantaged with regards to the choice of subjects they can study. Until two years ago, girls could only study courses in humanities whereas boys had the choice of studying either humanities or science. Even though the option of studying science is now available to girls, they continue to be disadvantaged because of limited resources. Firstly, the science teacher is also a school administrator because she is the only one trained for both of these positions.[93] Roshan describes the heavy burden placed on the science teacher and how this affects girls who wish to study science:

> Our science teacher in the government school has many other responsibilities besides teaching science. She also takes care of the whole staff. She has to advise them and she is responsible for the admissions. So only the talented girls gain from [science] and those who aren't as talented gain nothing...so many girls do not take science. (field interview)

There are virtually no women qualified to teach science as this subject has previously never been part of the curriculum. Most women have been unable to leave the district to study science. In comparison, there are a number of men who are qualified to teach science because this subject has been a part of the curriculum at the boys' school for more years than at the girls' school, and because men have the freedom to leave the district for higher studies. Secondly, the girls' school does not have adequate facilities like a laboratory and science equipment which are available at the boys' school. Most girls are, therefore, discouraged from taking science because they are unable to get adequate instruction and cannot do any practical laboratory work. Many girls also shy

[93]A few weeks before I departed from the research site, a new headmistress was hired for the girls' high school.

away from science because they find the program to be poorly developed and, hence, difficult. Furthermore, they cannot pursue science in the valley after they complete their matriculation. There is no higher secondary school and science cannot be learned through distance education as it involves practical laboratory work.

Consequently, most girls still follow the humanities route because they find it easier to perform well in this discipline particularly when they study through distance education. The culture of schooling also catches students in a web of competition where high marks are necessary to pursue further studies and to secure paid employment. This, in turn, influences girls' decisions to study humanities instead of science.

Course content

Overall, women with schooling find that they learn very few skills in school which they can apply to their daily life outside school. For example, one woman says,

> Many things we do not learn at school; we do not learn cooking just from the book.[94] We learn how to wash clothes at home not at school from the book. We also learn how to collect fodder and to graze cattles at home not at school. (field interview with Roshan)

For some girls their schooling has been useful because they have been able to help their younger siblings with their homework. However, sometimes even helping their brothers and sisters with their homework is hard to do because the girls forget much of what they have learned soon after they finish school. Rabia ,who has been out of school for about three years, explains,

> My education has been useful to me because I can teach my brothers and sisters. Now I have forgotten a lot of what I learned so it is hard for me to teach my younger sisters and brothers. (field interview)

Perceptions on discipline

Another issue which women share in their perceptions on schooling and which is closely related to teachers' interaction with students is discipline. Women's views on this issue are quite varied. Some women, particularly the community elders, feel that the teachers should physically punish children if they misbehave or do not complete

[94]The home economics course is taught from the book. There is no practical work.

their homework. They even argue that the education system was much better before because there was more physical punishment in the classrooms. Other mothers, however, are very concerned about this form of discipline in the schools because frequently it goes beyond limit. I recall one interview which was interrupted by a mother who was outraged because the teachers had punished her daughter for being absent from school. The teachers refused to believe that the young girl had been suffering from diarrhoea and punished her by making her stand in the hot sun for one hour. Such methods of disciplining are viewed negatively by women of the younger generation and, unlike the elders, younger women perceive physical punishment as an ineffective way for them to learn. A result of physical disciplining is that a number of girls even drop out of school at a very early age.

Unfulfilled Desires for Higher Education

According to many girls, another factor which works against their desire to learn is the unavailability of institutions for higher learning in the valley. Although the Pakistan Government announced in 1994 that a Girls' Higher Secondary School will be built in Booni, there are no definite plans as to when this will materialize. The community is also skeptical as to whether the government will follow through with its promise given its nature of making promises which, according to the community, are seldom kept. Therefore, the desire for most girls to study at a formal institution after matriculation usually remains unfulfilled. Those girls who continue with higher education after class 10 pursue it through distance learning.

Most girls are unable to leave the valley to pursue higher learning because of factors like mobility, financial constraints, gender expectations and marriage -- factors over which the men in their households have control. Although spatial boundaries for women have extended to the schools, the extensions of these boundaries beyond the household and the school are still issues of conflict amongst the community. Many families restrict their daughters from crossing the spatial boundaries of the village because they continue to have negative perceptions of single women travelling far from the homestead and living outside the protection of the family structure. Rabia talks about not being allowed to study in the "down district" after completing her matriculation: "My uncle did not let me get LHV [Lady Health Visitor] training. He does not like to send girls to other areas" (field interview).

However, in cases where either a Sunni or an Ismaili family does not have any hesitation about allowing a girl to leave the valley for higher studies, there are other surrounding factors which make it hard for them to send their daughter away. She

cannot go if there is no man to accompany her to her destination, and very often the girl's father or brothers have no time or do not have enough money to accompany her. Furthermore, living arrangements away from home also make it difficult for girls to leave the village. Adequate accommodation for girls in a suitable and culturally appropriate environment like a relative's home or a hostel is not easy to find. Most families cannot send a girl away because they have no relatives with whom their daughters can stay. These families are also concerned about their daughters living alone at a hostel. Some parents do not mind if their daughters live in a hostel, but problems of accommodation arise during vacation time when many hostels close. If a girl is living at a hostel and has no family in the particular town where she is studying, it becomes a financial burden for her father or brothers to come and bring her back to the valley. Moreover, the men often do not have time to come and bring their daughters or sisters back to the valley. Zarina describes this situtation:

> You know, they do not send them. When they go to the down district, they do not have any residence (relative's home) to live in. Some girls go to the hostel and when the hostels close it is difficult for parents to come and get their daughters for one week or twenty days; it is difficult because parents do not have money to pick their girls up from the hostel all the time. It is difficult to take them from the down district [and] the [girls] do not have any relatives to stay with [I interpret it as a relative's home where they might stay even during the holidays]. (fieldnotes, conversation)

Although some families have relatives in the "down district" with whom their daughters might live, the girls are still not allowed to go away. This leads to much disappointment amongst girls, like Rabia, who have hopes of leaving the valley to get further education. Rabia says, "I have an aunt in Lahore, but my uncles do not want to send me for LHV training. I feel very bad" (field interview).

A comparison between the perceptions of Ismaili and Sunni women suggests that Ismaili families are less rigid and less strict about sending their daughters far away to study. The majority of women who leave the valley for further studies are Ismaili women. Thus, access to higher learning in a formal institution tends to be better for Ismaili girls than Sunni girls.

Amongst both Sunni and Ismaili families, sons are generally provided with money to study outside the valley because families continue to perceive the opportunity costs to be better for the family. The return benefits to the family are considered to be more valuable if the son instead of the daughter gets higher education because boys are still

viewed as the "breadwinners" and girls as dependents. With the job market becoming more and more competitive, people think that for their sons to progress and get well-paying jobs they must know English, which they can only learn if they leave the valley. It is also easier to send their sons away because men can travel unaccompanied and can find accommodation anywhere.[95]

The retention rates of girls who leave the district for higher education is very low partly because they are faced with language and cultural barriers. Furthermore, they cannot cope with the course material because their schooling experiences in Booni have not given them a strong foundation on which to build. Consequently, some parents send or want to send their children to the Pamir Public School because they believe that their children will have a better chance of coping, particularly with language and course content, if they pursue higher studies in the "down district".

Gender expectations within the household also impact girls' accessibility to school and their opportunities for higher education. Right from class 1 girls are expected to contribute towards household maintenance, farming and childcare before and after school. These girls are responsible for looking after their younger siblings, washing dishes, grazing cattle and bringing water and small pieces of firewood. As they grow older, their responsibilities increase; they are expected to help with cooking, cleaning, farming and tending livestock. During harvest time, some older girls even miss a day of school to help their families either because they feel obliged to help or because they are expected to contribute to this task. Some girls even miss school to cook and clean when their mothers are pregnant or ill.

Most mothers have expressed that they are making sacrifices, like working hard at home without their daughters' help, so that their daughters can study. However, it appears that these mothers perceive "studying" time as the time when their daughters leave for school to the time they return home in the afternoon. Once the girls arrive from school, their household duties leave them with very little time to complete their homework or study for exams. It is not uncommon to see some girls studying while they graze the cattle. Most girls end up doing much of their homework late in the evening and, as a result, are too tired to focus their full attention on their studies. Consequently, they find their studies very difficult and often feel torn between their household and school responsibilities. Shahnaz explains,

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[95]These perceptions on school and work will be discussed in Chapter VII "Women's Perceptions of Schooling and Work."

> I found my studies difficult because I had no time to do my [home]-work....There was no one at home to help my mother. My eldest sister is married and lives at her husband's home so I had to help my mother. (field interview)

Boys' contribution to the household, however, differs largely from the girls'. Boys usually help out with seasonal work like harvesting and ploughing, work which is slowly being taken over by machinery. Boys have more time to complete their homework and it is not uncommon to see them playing games or wandering about in the villages in their free time. Shahnaz compares the time her brother and she used to have to concentrate on school work:

> My brother used to study more than I did. He had no work to do in the house; I had housework to do. He used to play football for two hours and he used to study from two o'clock to four o' clock in the afternoon and from seven o'clock to ten o'clock at night. I used to study at night. I did housework after I came home from school [around two o'clock] to seven o'clock in the evening. (field interview)

Many girls feel bad about doing housework and not having extra time to study. Some girls even wish they could also play and have a good time like their brothers. However, they just dismiss this as a desire which can never be fulfilled because girls are not expected to play and have fun. Rabia shares her thoughts:

> My youngest brother ploughs sometimes, otherwise he goes to play football....I wish I could play with him sometimes, but girls are not allowed to play. No girls play. (field interview)

However, some girls think that they study more than their brothers even though they have so many household duties at home because their brothers waste the extra time which is given to them. As one young women says, "I do more school work at home. My brother is only interested in playing football" (fieldnotes, conversation with Jamila).

In some cases, girls are not allowed to leave the valley after completing their matriculation because they are expected to help their mothers with household work. Shahnaz really wanted to go to Peshawar for further education. She had the necessary marks and her father has the money for her tuition. However, her father did not want her to leave Booni because there would have been no one at home to help Shahnaz's

mother. Shahnaz also felt responsible to help her mother as her family is not the traditional extended family and Shahnaz's older sisters are married. Shahnaz thinks that if there had been someone at home to help her mother, her father would have allowed her to go to Peshawar:

> After I left class 10, I used to do housework with my mother. I [could] not go to Peshawar for higher studies because my mother was alone at home and I wanted to help her. My father told me that I should stay at home and help my mother. If my mother had had help, then I would have gone to Peshawar to study [like other girls in my class]. I would have stayed at the hostel in Peshawar. I had good marks so I would have been able to go to school in Peshawar and stay in the hostel. (field interview)

Shahnaz is one of the many girls who has no desire to learn through distance education because of the difficulties encountered in coordinating their household responsibilities and their school work. When Shahnaz's father told her she could not go away for further schooling, Shahnaz felt discouraged from continuing with her studies. While she was completing her matriculation, she had found it very difficult to coordinate her household work and her schoolwork. Based on this experience, she did not tell her father about her desire to complete class 11 and 12. However, her father arranged for her distance education[96] on his own accord and she could not refuse.

> My father told me that I was going to do my class 11 and 12. I did not tell him that I wanted to do it. I did not want to ask him because I [knew] I could not study at home. I had no time. If I had had time...then I would have asked him. (field interview with Shahnaz)

Shahnaz's example illustrates the lack of understanding of most parents about managing household work with distance education. Although her father has experienced the education system, having acquired a Bachelor of Arts Degree and having taught in a small neigbouring village, he conveys little appreciation about the time committment Shahnaz would have in coordinating the demands of both distance education and her household and agricultural work. This suggests that men do not have a clear perception of the workload women have at home. In most cases, it is those parents with no or very little schooling who do not understand the time committment and expectations of school, and, thus, who do not understand the workload which goes

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[96]As explained previously, distance education refers to learning done through correspondence.

into formal learning. When girls participate in distance education, parents find it even harder to understand the challenges presented by this form of learning. Mothers, especially, think their daughters do not have much to do and expect their daughters to contribute more to the household.

Like Shahnaz, Rabia also pursued higher studies through distance education. She has completed her class 12, but is not satisfied that she learned enough. Rabia was unable to understand much of the course material even though she had help from a tutor. Furthermore, she found it difficult to coordinate her household work, her studies and going for private tuition. Rabia shares her perceptions of distance education:

> I did my studies "privately"[97] [distance education] and completed my F.A. [class 12]. It is not good to study "privately." When we study "privately," we do not learn well; we do not understand the books well. If I had difficulties, I used to go to my neighbour, who is a teacher, every 10-15 days. If I had time I used to study. I used to do household work....I had to do so much housework [because] my aunt [uncle's wife] used to stay at her parents' home a lot and my mother was alone at home. Therefore, I had to help my mother. My mother used to ask me to help her. I always used to study at night for about two hours and then I used to study about three times a week during the day.
>
> I am not doing any other studies right now. I do not want to do my B.A.. I cannot go anywhere...to study as a regular student. I have become disheartened. There are no opportunities for women to study in an institution in Chitral after their *matric* and I am not allowed to go elsewhere to study. I have no choice but to study "privately". (field interview)

Rabia is discouraged and disheartened; she wants to continue her studies, but not through distance learning. Not only do girls, like Rabia, find it difficult to combine their studies with domestic labour, but they also find distance education very difficult and unfulfilling.

Some girls are discouraged from doing distance education because there is no one at home to help them with their studies and they are too shy to seek help in the village. Sultana's daughter, Zulekha, used to find it difficult to study when she was doing her matriculation because there was no help available at home and her mother says Zulekha was too shy to go for tuition. Sultana saved some money for Zulekha's distance education. She did not want Zulekha to go away to study in a formal institution because she is a girl. Zulekha refused to accept the money and her mother,

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[97]Local people refer to home-based distance education as "private" education.

consequently, arranged for Zulekha's marriage. Sultana explains why she thinks her daughter gave up her opportunity for higher learning: "It was up to her *rozi* [98] if *Allah* wanted her to go to school or get married; if she had refused marriage for schooling, I would have let her continue school" (field interview). However, Zulekha's perception on this incidence is quite different from her mother's. Zulekha thought distance learning would be hard if there was no one to help her at home, so she refused her mother's offer to pay for her education. Zulekha has now changed her mind about distance education. Her younger sister has completed her matriculation and Zulekha is encouraging her to complete class 11 through distance education because Zulekha's husband can help her.[99] Now that Zulekha is married, she is also considering distance education because her husband can help her. Thus Zulekha says,

> My sister can go and get help from others, I could not go.[Zulekha's mother interjects: "She is a shy one"]. My sister will get help from my husband. Before there was no one at home to help me. Now I will also study because my husband can help me. (field interview with Sultana and Zulekha)

What is also apparent from Zulekha's and Sultana's views is that older women attribute a person's destiny to a larger intangible force, *Allah*, whereas younger women relate to the more tangible circumstances in their lives.

While marriage is an avenue for Zulekha to enhance her schooling opportunities, for most women in the valley, marriage is a deterrent to their learning. Even though "mass" schooling has increased the age of marriage from about 10 years old or younger to about 17 years old or older, marriage still continues to work against women's access to higher education. Generally, most families wait until their daughters have finished their matriculation before arranging their marriage. Most mothers and their daughters express a desire for further schooling rather than early marriage. However, there are some instances when a family is pressured by the boys' family and they find it difficult to refuse. According to marriage traditions in this culture, a respected member of the community,usually an elder who has contributed much to the community, is asked by the boy's family to go and request permission from the girl's father or brother for her hand in marriage. Culturally, it is usually very difficult for the men to refuse the elders. Moreover, the family's reputation may be at stake if they decline the offer. Certain

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[98]Refers to one's destiny.

[99]Unlike most families where daughters live with their in-laws, Sultana's daughter and son-in-law live with Sultana.

families also agree to the marriage if they feel that the boy is a suitable partner for their daughter and that such a request may not transpire again. In many cases, the girls' parents agree to the proposals only if their daughter will be allowed to continue her studies for as long as she wants.

Nearly always, mothers and daughters themselves do not have a voice in this matter. If mothers were to interfere, it could lead to their own divorce. One of the girls at the hostel also describes the limited voice young single women have in the family:

> Our tradition is that in the village proposals come and parents decide. Girls cannot say anything. A girl goes to school and looks after the cows. Who asks her? She comes home after grazing the cattle and sees her mother sewing clothes and she asks her mother what is this. Her mother says we have arranged your marriage. She cries. Who listens? (field interview with Yasmin)

Sometimes relatives pressure girls' parents and even threaten to sever family relations if the girls' parents do not agree. A local man, Qair, who had high hopes of providing his daughter with higher education, found himself in this predicament. Qair felt obliged to give his daughter's hand in marriage because his relatives threatened to break off family ties. He made a request to his daughter's in-laws that they allow her to complete her bachelor's degree through distance education as it is not culturally acceptable for a young married woman, particularly a newly wed woman, to leave her husband's home to study unless she goes to stay with her parents. Her in-laws complied and Qair's daughter pursued her higher education through distance learning.

A consequence of getting married before, or soon after, completing matriculation is that girls' opportunities for higher learning decrease. Although some girls do not move into their in-laws home until they have completed their matriculation, those girls who do so find it very difficult to balance their schoolwork with the demanding expectations of a daughter-in-law, like contributing toward domestic labour. Thus Aisha, who got married before completing her matriculation, says, "[m]arried girls cannot study properly because they have to work at home" (field interview). In certain cases, the in-laws do not fulfil their promise to the girls' parents and do not allow their daughters-in-law to continue their studies. Once the girls leave their parents home, they must obey and respect their husbands' wishes as well as the wishes of her husband's family. These realities are described by Aisha whose parents were coerced by their relatives to give her hand in marriage before she finished her matriculation:

> They gave my hand in marriage when I was in class 9 because my sister-in-law is my uncle's sister. They demanded for my hand in marriage to my husband. My parents thought that he would let me complete my schooling...so they gave me to him. They force[d] my parents for two years for my hand in marriage. [My husband] told my parents at that time that he would allow me to complete my schooling -- now he refuses me to get further education. My parents ask me to try my best to get further education. I feel very sorry that I got married [and I could not study further]. (field interview)

Thus women face many circumstances over which they usually have no control and which prevent them from accessing higher education.

Women Give Meaning to Schooling in Their Lives

The most important value attached to schooling by the community is linked to the cash economy. The community generally perceives schooling to be the ticket to paid employment and, hence, to the benefits associated with paid work like financial independence and working in a clean environment. The second part of this chapter will be devoted to the themes arising from women's perceptions of the relationship between schooling and work. This section will focus on the importance of schooling as a way to access the "modern" world, to gain independence and to enhance traditional roles. The implications of these values in a cultural context will also be discussed.

Access to the "Modern" World

One of the results of development in any culture is the influx of value systems and ideas from other regions of the world. Development is gradually bringing the rest of Pakistan and other countries "closer" to the people of Booni Valley. Different modes of media, like newspapers and television, are starting to shape a new set of value systems amongst today's generation in Booni. Many homes, including the hostel, have a television and VCR. Communication with the rest of the district, the country and the world has also become easier and more accessible as a result of jeep and air travel, the telephone and fax machines. In the schools, children follow the curriculum used by other children in the rest of the North West Frontier Province. Students also come into contact with people from other regions within and outside Chitral District who come to visit the schools. Exposure to the world "outside" the valley has caused people to question their values and culture, and has prompted them to adopt aspects of this "other" world, like Urdu and English, which, to them, represent opportunity, freedom and hope.

Language and Communication

For centuries, Khowar, a language originally without script, has been the medium of communication amongst the people of Booni and the larger Chitral District. However, when men started to migrate to the "down district" in search of paid employment, they also found it necessary to learn Urdu, Pakistan's official language. As linkages between Chitral District and the rest of Pakistan have developed, more and more local people have found it necessary to learn Urdu, and in some instances English, Pakistan's second official language. The language of instruction in the government and Aga Khan schools is Urdu, and English is taught as a second language

right from primary school. In a few private schools, the language of instruction is English. All children learn to read the *Holy Quran* in Arabic. Language shifts are resulting in cultural change which in turn is affecting the values attributed to Khowar, the ancestral language of the local people. Although Khowar still remains the main language of communication in most villages and homes, the community has come to place great value on Urdu and English, particularly English, and Khowar has become increasingly devalued. Those people who can communicate in English and, to some extent, even Urdu are generally accorded a high status in the community.

Khowar has come to be seen as a language which limits opportunities to access the "modern" world. In contrast, Urdu and English are viewed as instrumental to higher education, travel to different areas, paid employment and communication with people visiting or coming to work in the valley from outside the district. Two examples illustrate the community's views on English. First, the villagers place much value on the Pamir Public School because it offers English instruction which the community thinks will enable all students of this school to find high paying jobs. Second, whenever I spoke in English to Zarina, many women, in particular the hostel residents, would always whisper to one another "she [I, the researcher] is a lucky one." The girls at the hostel would personally tell me that they thought I was very fortunate to be able to communicate in English, which symbolizes a language of opportunity for them -- an opportunity to travel and obtain higher education which they think I am able to have because I speak English and which they think they are unable to have because they cannot speak this language. It was not unusual for them to scornfully exclaim "what is Khowar? We cannot do anything with this language."

For most of the older women in Booni, learning Urdu and English at school represents an opportunity which they did not have, but which is available for their daughters, to access the "modern" world. They perceive the ability to converse in these languages is a means for their daughters to find paid employment as most institutions require employees to speak in Urdu and/or English. The younger generation of women in the valley also see language as the key to getting paid employment, but also to accessing higher education, particularly in the "down district." However, language is perceived primarily as functional; in daily cultural practices, women who are employed in the wage sector, particularly in the schools, only use Urdu at the workplace, but speak Khowar at all other times.

As development increases in the valley, people in the community are coming into contact with people from other parts of the country and the world who visit the valley. Therefore, knowing Urdu and English is also perceived as important for

daughters because it would allow them to communicate with these guests. This is expressed by Sultana who says,"[e]ducation is good for the girl...at least she can talk with the guests" (field interview with Sultana). However, when these visitors do come to the valley, only a few people in the village, such as those with high status and positions in the community, have the opportunity to interact with the guests; the rest of the people, particularly the women, only hear about these guests. Older women associate this interaction with prestige and aspire to be a part of this group, but do not have such an opportunity. Consequently, they think that if their daughters can speak Urdu and English, they can be in positions of status and can interact with and be a part of this presitigious group.

A result of this value shift in language is that most local people who only speak Khowar think they are ignorant and not good enough to associate with visitors. This was particularly evident when I went to the older women's homes and asked them to share their schooling and life experiences with me. I was probably one of the first "outsiders" to ever visit these women in their homes and speak with them about their life experiences. The women would wonder why I had come to speak with them and their common response was "I am not an educated one. I cannot read and write. I have nothing valuable to tell you" (field notes). One woman also expressed, "[i]f I had gone to school, I would have been able to talk to you" (field interview with Sakeena). I also sensed that the women were embarrassed because they were dependent on Zarina to communicate with me. Although the women saw their language barrier as the problem in communication between us, I also felt awkward at times to depend on Zarina to cross the boundaries of communication which were separating the women and myself. It seems to me that a large part of the women's embarrassment is a result of the devaluing of their ancestral language. Not being able to communicate with me, an "outsider," is a concrete experience which likely made them feel even more limited by their own language. However, the women were generally very happy to host Zarina and me in their homes. While their kindness and generosity typifies the hospitality extended by the whole community to any guest, local or non-local, having me in their homes likely gave the women an added sense of prestige.

A reality for most younger women who speak Urdu is that they too hardly come into contact with guests. People from other parts of Pakistan and the world rarely visit their homes. Only those women who have paid employment positions and school-going girls have the opportunity to meet non-local people at the workplace. Women who have finished school and who do not have paid work virtually never come into contact with people who speak Urdu or English because their movements outside the

household are restricted by *purdah*, family decisions and time constraints due to household responsibilities. Aisha, a woman with formal education, said that schooling was a valuable experience because she learned to speak Urdu and she can now communicate easily with people from the "down district" who speak this language. When I asked her if she ever gets the opportunity to speak Urdu, she replied "no" because the members in her household only communicate in Khowar and no visitors ever come to the home. Furthermore, she does not leave the household because of *purdah*. She explains,

> I have been to school.....I can talk with others. I can understand other languages like Urdu. I can also use Urdu to speak with others. No one at home speaks Urdu. I never speak Urdu at home. I do not get to speak it with others. No one comes in the house and I do not go outside. (field interview with Aisha)

Only one woman with schooling in the sample mentioned that she was able to speak in Urdu with the wives of her husband's business partners from the "down district."

Although younger women, like Aisha, mention that it is useful for them to know Urdu so they can speak with guests, only a few of the young women with schooling willingly communicated with me in Urdu when I went to their homes either to visit or for an interview. Some of these women attempted to speak with me in Urdu, but only when Zarina and the young women's elders were not present. When Zarina and the older women of the household were speaking, the younger women generally sat and observed silently, only interjecting with a few comments. This pattern appeared to repeat itself in most homes. In some instances, Zarina and I had to request the older women to leave the room during an interview. Except for the hostel girls in my sample, none of the young women with schooling consented to an interview in Urdu.[100] Only one woman, who is approximately the same age as Zarina, consented to an interview in Urdu. I noticed that many girls at the hostel spoke comfortably with me in Urdu while Zarina was present. However, it took some of them quite awhile to reach this level of comfort. This suggests that some women were likely shy and unsure of my presence and might have opened up had they been given the chance to become more comfortable with me.

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[100]While the interviews with the hostel girls were conducted by my mother and me, I did have some conversations with the hostel girls with Zarina as a translator. Although the girls were a little shy, they did not refuse to speak in Urdu like the girls in the village.

The young women's behaviour when communicating with me in Urdu also seems to stem from an inability to speak Urdu fluently and, at times, an inability to carry on a conversation with ease. Girls acquire Urdu and English through memorization and rote learning methods at school; they rarely speak either of these languages outside the classroom setting or at home. Many girls even forget the Urdu which they learn at school because they do not use it on a regular basis. In the focus group interview which my mother helped me to conduct, the girls' were constantly searching for vocabulary in Urdu and could not express themselves in clear sentences; we eventually had to rely on Zarina to translate in Khowar. Thus, when it came to individual interviews, most girls probably refused to speak in Urdu because they felt intimidated by Zarina's strong Urdu communication skills, which she acquired primarily in Karachi, the largest urban centre in the "down district." It appears that language study is functional, but only to a limited extent.

Mothers and daughters also believe that schooling develops self-confidence and one's ability to express her/himself verbally to others. However, there appears to be a contradiction between what the women perceive and what is practiced as a result of the gendering which takes place at school and at home. At school, the girls' verbal communication skills are repressed because they are expected not to talk very much once they reach class 6. The teachers tell them that, culturally, it is not appropriate for girls to talk much. Furthermore, the rote learning and memorization which takes place at school does not allow students to develop confidence in expressing themselves. Many girls are also discouraged to speak much at home once they reach puberty. Their mothers tell them that "they are grown up...so they should not speak a lot" (field interview with Shahnaz). According to Shahnaz, she will be able to speak confidently and to the guests "when [she] is old like [her] mother" (field interview).

In a few instances, adolescent girls are encouraged, particularly by their mothers, to communicate confidently with non-family members, usually women. Sultana describes how shy her daughters are to speak with others despite her efforts to get them to do so. She thinks that when her daughters get paid employment they might be able to communicate comfortably with other people:

> At home, the girls feel shy to talk; when they get employment, maybe they will be used to talking to people. I ask them to talk to people, but they do not. [W]ith each other they speak, but not with other people. The older one has left school three years ago so she is used to speaking; the other left only a little while ago so she can't speak to others; my daughter who did not go to school is bold and speaks to everyone. (field interview with Sultana)

The notion of "the right way" for a woman to behave is promulgated by the school and the home environment. Few mothers, like Sultana, encourage their daughters to express themselves. Sultana's example also illustrates that some women do not perceive schooling to develop a girls' confidence and that it is either within the home environment or the formal sector that women gain communication skills.

Knowledge and Intellect

Schooling is also important for young women because they can acquire knowledge and share it with their mothers. For example, girls can communicate to their parents about the importance of healthcare and cleanliness. For many young women schooling is also seen as important because it develops their ability to have more "intellectual" conversations than their mothers. Schooling allows them to talk about a range of topics other than those concerning their families and farm life which constitute the main subject matter of their mothers' discussions. Girls value schooling because they can talk about issues related to the modern world like employment, their possibilities for higher studies, their assignments, teaching methods at school and life in other villages. Yasmin compares the conversations she has with her friends and the conversations between her mother and other older women in the village:

> My mother and her friends converse about things like, "what did you do today," "how are the children," and other common talk, but not finding out....They [have not been] to school. Our conversations are [different]. When we go [back] to the village [the village of their residence] we meet other educated girls. We ask questions like: how are the lessons at your school?; have any new teachers come?; have there been any new happenings at school?; what is the teaching method like?; how do you study?; have you had your exams?; did you pass?. They ask if the hostel is beautiful. We ask them, they ask us. We talk about knowledge. We also talk about our future and [where we will work]. They say after [middle] school they will also come to the hostel. (field interview)

Yasmin's words also suggest a shift in values from her mother's to her own generation. Just as language has a utilitarian purpose, schooling also has a specific function which is to get a job.

For Yasmin, being able to participate in the interview and share her experiences with my mother and me in Urdu also symbolized an important achievement for her; she was able to utilize her education skills like learning languages and having intellectual

conversations. She thinks that it is important for all women to go to school and acquire such skills. Yasmin says, "I am able to converse with you [researcher and translator] because of schooling. This is necessary for [all] women" (field interview).

Schooling is perceived as a positive experience for most girls because it is a place for building friendships with girls from Booni and from other villages. For some girls, like Shahnaz, it is also valuable for building relationships with other people in the community and learning about the community. One of her most memorable experiences was learning how to make jam from a female staff member of the Chitral Area Development Project. Not only was it a learning experience for her, but it was also important because she made contacts in case she ever has to go far away to work. Moreover, it exposed her to different types of work available in the community.

Schooling has helped young women to develop their reading and writing skills which, in turn, has increased their communication with people in other villages. Girls living at the hostel, for example, can connect and communicate easily with their families and friends through letters. When the girls leave the hostel, they can also correspond with friends they have made in Booni. Most women with schooling feel sorry for their mothers who are unable to communicate with their relatives who live in villages far away from Booni. Furthermore, being able to read is also important because the women can learn about the world through the newspaper.

While literacy is also an important skill for the women to have to access the modern world, they also think it is a valuable skill because it can help them connect with their roots and understand the *Holy Quran*. As Naseema says, "[b]y getting secular education, they will be able to know the meaning of the *Holy Quran*" (field interview). Moreover, *Quranic* literacy is also important for the women to maintain in their culture where religion shapes a significant portion of the community's value systems. Thus Naseema adds, "[i]f they only learn the *Holy Quran*, how will they know the meaning of the *Holy Quran*. If they go to school only, they will learn English and Urdu, but not the *Holy Quran*. They need to learn both secular and religious education" (field interview).

Independence

The ability to read and write is not only valued by women with schooling, but by all women in Booni. Many women who cannot read and write feel helpless as they have to depend on others to correspond with relatives in other areas of the district. Consequently, mothers want their daughters to go to school and learn how to write so that they do not have to depend on anyone, especially men in the household, to read

and write letters for them. Girls with schooling also value the independence and practical benefits that literacy has given to them. For example, being able to read and write has made it possible for Yasmin to live at the hostel. Yasmin does not have a father so her older brother makes the household decisions. Her older brother has a job in Islamabad and does not come to their village very often. Because Yasmin is literate, she was able to write a letter to him and tell him that she wanted to live at the hostel so that she could continue with her studies:

> We can write letters, we are ready. Our mothers depended on others, especially the educated sons to write or read a letter for them. My desire was to get registered at the hostel. I wrote a letter from here to my brother and told him about the hostel. He wrote back to me [and gave me permission to go]. (field interview)

Also linked to independence is the women's ability to fill out their own admission forms or help their younger brothers and sisters fill out their admission forms for school. This value is expressed by Yasmin who says, "[w]e [are able] to fill out the registration forms for the hostel ourselves. Our mothers could not do this" (field interview).

Even with literacy skills, women are still interdependent or dependent on the men as the women cannot go into the public space of the *bazaar*. This restriction of space cost one woman, Zehra, the opportunity of continuing with her studies. She had completed class 11 through distance education and had to fill out an application form to write the exams. Her older brothers were very busy so no one was able to bring a form for her.[101] Being a woman she could not go to the *bazaar* to get a form for herself. Zehra applied too late and did not want to wait for another year to re-apply. Her younger brother ended up using the funds which their mother had saved for his sister's education because Zehra did not want to continue her education. Her words illustrate quite powerfully the fate of women who are dependent on men:

> No one brought any forms for me to fill out....We are not allowed to go out. We are not allowed to go to the *bazaar*. We are not allowed to go [wherever we want to], so I could not get any forms in time. (fieldnotes, conversation with Zehra)

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[101] After completing the required courses for a certain class level through distance education, students have to fill out an application form to write the exams. This form is sent to the various institutions through which students pursue distance education.

In some households, not only are the women dependent on men to bring the forms, but some men, like Aisha's husband, will not allow the women to fill out their own forms. Aisha wants to complete her class 12 through distance education, but her husband does not want her to continue her studies. He also told her that when he thinks she should pursue further education, he will fill out her forms. She says, "my husband does not want me to do more schooling.... He says he will fill out the forms for me [when he thinks I should do more studies]" (field interview with Aisha). Despite women's desire to be literate and despite the independence which some women have gained from acquiring this skill, women are still dependent on men because of cultural perceptions of space.

Mobility is another form of independence which schooling is believed to impart. Women without schooling often compared themselves to me and said that if they had been to school they could have left the valley, the district or the country to pursue other interests. Many of them think they do not have the necessary skills to leave the valley and engage in activities other than domestic labour. Thus Fatima compares herself to her daughter and to me:

> Of course, if a person becomes educated, she can go here and there, she can do everything like you; you got an education that is why you have come here. I have not gotten any education. I cannot go anywhere. My daughter has passed her matriculation so at least she can go somewhere; an uneducated person can't go anywhere. (field interview)

Women without schooling see themselves like prisoners confined to life around their homestead. A statement by Sultana illustrates this view: "In my time, if there was school, then I would have liked to go...now I am living in a dark house and I don't go out" (field interview).

Women with schooling also think that formal education will make them more mobile in a culture where women's movements are quite restricted. With schooling, they think they would be able to travel out of the district, get training for paid employment or work in villages outside the valley. Schooling has increased women's mobility in the community to some degree as they now participate in the culture of school which lies outside the household boundaries. In some instances, women also have the opportunity to work in paid employment within the village, within the district and, in one or two cases, outside the district.

While women have gained some form of freedom, they are still fairly restricted by traditions of "accepted" space which have been culturally embedded into their

society for generations. "To go anywhere," most women, with or without schooling, have to first get permission from men which is usually denied. Financial difficulties also prevent women from leaving the valley to pursue other interests.[102] Even within the village women with schooling are not free to go "everywhere." As explained earlier, girls who have to pass through the *bazaar* on their way to school, for example, take detours to avoid walking right in the middle of this space where only the men gather. In some instances, it means walking twice as long to get to school. Although some girls wonder what it would be like to have the freedom to enter the *bazaar*, none of them would attempt this as their families' and their personal respectability would be at stake if they were to wander about in this male-dominated area. Moreover, they would feel very embarrassed to be in the presence of hundreds of strange men.

Although women in Booni express a desire for schooling so that they can increase their access to the modern world, deeply embedded cultural traditions are creating a dichotomy between what the women desire and what they can actually have. There is no doubt that the modern world has opened up to the Booni women of today's generation as a result of their increased mobility and the language and literacy skills which they have acquired. However, they still encounter cultural and financial barriers which limit their access to the modern world.

Enhancement of Traditional Roles

A paradox between traditional and modern values is apparent in women's perceptions of how schooling enhances traditional roles and also helps them to access the modern world. An important value placed on schooling is that girls can learn how to be better mothers, better cooks, take better care of the home and knit and do embroidery well.

Care Giving

Women with no schooling believe that educated mothers can take better care of children and help them with their homework. When Zarina's children accompanied us to the women's homes, some of the women with no schooling would compare their child rearing practices to what they saw of Zarina's interactions with her children. Shora, for example, said to us, "[i]f I had been to school, of course I would have been able to take care of my children very carefully, very nicely, very cleanly. Look how

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[102]These issues related to mobility will be discussed in more detail in Chapter VII "Women's Perceptions of Schooling and Work."

you [Zarina] are taking care of your children -- the educated take better care of their children" (field interview).

Women with no formal education also think that schooling enables women to consult books to learn how to look after their children. However, when I asked Naseema, who has had no schooling, about her methods of raising her children, she mentioned child care methods which most women said that only formally educated mothers practice, like providing good hygiene and nutrition. The only thing which Naseema said she could not do was help her children with their homework.

Young women who have been to school or who are currently going to school also think that schooling will make them better mothers than their own mothers. They will not treat their children badly. Instead, they will make up a time table for them, help them with their homework, ask them to study, keep them clean and send them to school clean. Yasmin describes the way she would raise her children compared to her mother:

> I will give my children more opportunities to study and less household work. In the morning I will send them to school. When they come back from school, I will teach them lessons. I will give them time to play and time to study. I will help them to study. I will make a timetable for them. My parents were from a different time. They did not do this. I had to work hard on my own. I will speak with [my children] about their times compared to my times. (field interview)

Young women and their mothers both think schooling will also enable them to impart better manners to their children. Some young women think that children whose parents belong to the older generation learn to be mischievous at home. They also think their mothers curse and gossip because they have not been to school.

My observations of the interactions between Zarina and her children and women with no schooling and their children indicate a difference in child rearing practices. Whenever Zarina's daughter came home from school, Zarina asked her to change out of her uniform, eat and do her homework. In fact, there were often conflicts between the two women when her daughter was supposed to do her homework, but instead wanted to play or to come to visit the women's homes with Zarina and me. Zarina always took care of her children's hygiene. She made sure her daughter went to school with clean clothes and that her hair was washed and neatly combed; before her children ate any

food, she also asked them to wash their hands. She also sat with her sons and taught them a few basic reading and writing skills in English and Urdu.[103]

In contrast, I observed interactions between a young girl, Shaida, who is about Zarina's daughter's age, and her mother, who has not been to school. Their family is an extended one and the children are expected to obey all of their elders. I was present in this home a few times during the period when the children came back from school. Shaida's mother hardly ever asked her daughter to change out of her uniform and do her homework. Instead, Shaida either helped her mother in the kitchen or brought visitors, like Zarina and myself, something to eat. One morning she did not go to school because her uniform got wet during a rainfall at night. When her grandfather asked his wife why their grandchild had not gone to school, his wife replied that it did not matter and that one day would not make a difference in their granddaughter's life. The grandfather told his wife that, although one day may seem like nothing, the fees for the day had been wasted and their granddaughter had missed out on a day's worth of knowledge. While my observations reveal differences in the child-rearing practices of formally educated mothers and mothers with no schooling, I think the patterns of child care amongst formally educated mothers and mothers who have not been to school will make themselves more clear in future generations as most young women from the era when "mass" schooling first began are only now just becoming mothers.

Women with and without schooling both perceive that formal education allows a mother to participate more in her child's schooling experiences and, thereby, feel connected to the child's experiences. Many older women feel disconnected from their daughters' schooling experiences because they do not have the same knowledge base and are not literate. They think that with schooling they might have been able to speak with the teachers at the schools about their daughters' education. Women with schooling think that they are more fortunate than their own mothers because they will be able to go to the schools and speak with their children's teachers. In reality, however, those women with schooling hardly go to the schools to inquire about their children's education. Firstly, it is not culturally appropriate for them to go to the boys' school to speak with male teachers. Secondly, if they were to go and see their daughters' teachers, they would need to be escorted and this is often not possible. Thirdly, many women do not have time to leave their household responsibilities. Moreover, the financial responsibilities as well as matters concerning school are seen as

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[103]Zarina's sons are younger than her daughter and were not enrolled in school during the period when this research was conducted.

male responsibilities, even though *purdah* restricts men from going inside the girls' school.[104]

Overall, schooling is perceived as a way to make women better caregivers and to allow them to connect to their children's schooling experiences. While examples of community life reflect a shift in child-rearing practices amongst women with formal education, there are few shifts in women's movements outside the household to interact with people at their daughters' schools. It would be interesting to see the type of cultural shifts that would take place in future generations as more and more women become formally educated.

Household Labour

Most mothers think schooling teaches their daughters to clean their homes better and express a deep desire for their daughters to go to school to learn this skill. This is particularly important for older women whose daughters have reached the age of marriage. These older women think that most men in the community would rather wed formally educated women. During an informal conversation with one of the local men, he said,

> I would rather be married to a woman who has been to school. She would have better sense. If I brought a sack of rice home, a wife with no school would cook the whole sack of rice; a wife who has been to school would cook according to how many people there are at home. (fieldnotes, conversation)

Thus this man's views on women's schooling seem to support the older women who want their daughters to receive formal education and get a good spouse.

Some tensions are evident in young women's thoughts about schooling and cleanliness. For some young women, schooling has taught them to clean better than their mothers. One girl, Shahnaz, describes the meticulous way in which she cleans the

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[104]Fathers cannot go to see their daughters' teachers, particularly at the government school, because it is not culturally appropriate for them to be in the presence of unrelated women. As one mother describes,

> [My husband] goes mostly to the public school [Aga Khan School]....He is allowed to see [the teachers at this school] and to talk to them. At the government school, he is not allowed to go inside the school because there are also Sunni teachers there. Some of them [the female teachers] are in *purdah*. The teachers are the ones who decide if the parents can come or not. (field interview with Shora)

home and the haphazard way in which her mother cleans the home. She also shares how carefully she washes and irons her clothes compared to her mother:

> My mother only sweeps the house, but I clean everything including the *almaris* [cupboards]. I also wipe the dust off everything. I learned how to do this at school. We learned this from books and our teachers also told us how to do this.....When my mother washes clothes, I check to see if any of them are ripped and need to be repaired. I also wash them so that they are cleaner and I iron them. My mother does not take care when she washes the clothes. For example, when I wash a *dupatta*[105], I will look for stains and try to remove them. My mother does not do this. (field interview with Shahnaz)

However, many girls told me that they did not learn practical skills, like cleaning, from their books at school. These are skills which they have acquired at home. A conflict between these girls' views and the perceptions of women with no schooling is apparent. Women with no formal education think that they are unable to teach their daughters about cleaning because they have never had time to learn nor do they have time to clean as meticulously as their daughters who have been to school. My sense is that daily routines at the school, where girls are expected to clean the classroom and are punished during weekly uniform checks if they do not come to school clean, have probably made cleanliness a natural part of the girls' lives. Furthermore, the community seems to attach a status to cleanliness which was evident whenever Zarina and I spoke with women from low-income homes. They would often compare their lifestyle and clothing to what they perceived of my lifestyle from my appearance, and comment that they were dirty and not worthy of much.

This chapter reveals a rich and complex meaning that women give to schooling in their lives. Their expectations of what schooling can provide often contradicts what is culturally acceptable in their community. Although most women have distinct dichotomous perceptions of traditional and modern lifestyles, they paradoxically perceive schooling as an avenue to participate in the prestige of the modern world and as a means to enhance their traditional roles.

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[105]A piece of cloth, like a scarf, which women wrap around their upper body and with which the women cover their heads.

CHAPTER VII:

WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOLING AND WORK

An Economy in Transition

A major theme which emerges from the women's perceptions on schooling is the relation of schooling to work. For generations the people of Booni Valley have been involved in agriculture. Both men and women have worked in this sector which has been the principle source of livelihood for their families and themselves. The men have done most of the heavy work like ploughing, harvesting and threshing. The women have been responsible for weeding, caring for livestock, cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, and taking care of children. The women have also helped the men sometimes with threshing and harvesting of crops. Although there is a division of labour in the farm work, the local people have seen this as shared and complementary work. Most of the work in the community, like harvesting for example, was shared. The products generated from this labour have been primarily for household use, not for cash.

Another responsibility which men have had is earning additional cash income for the family. Previously, most men have had to migrate to Chitral town or to the "down district" in search of wage labour as the cash economy in Booni was not strong. They have also been responsible for bringing household items like food and other provisions to the home. Women's work has revolved mainly around the household as gender structures within the community have restricted women from moving freely outside the household and from earning a cash income.

The division of labour in Booni was also previously structured around a caste system. People of the upper caste, the *lals* , were the rulers. Middle caste people generally had military responsibilities. The *Chirmugh* , who belonged to the lower caste, performed manual labour on the nobles' land. The community placed high status on the work done by the noble families and looked down upon the work done by the *Chirmugh*.

Changing socio-economic trends of recent years are causing shifts within the traditional divisions of labour and the *status quo* within the caste system.[106] Economic growth and development in the valley have created opportunities for local people to enter the paid labour market. Paid employment, particularly in the formal sector, is greatly valued by the local people and this is resulting in a hierarchical class structure which is gradually replacing the previous caste system.

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[106]See Chapter IV "Historical Perspectives of Pakistan and Chitral District."

A significant shift in the division of labour has seen the start of women's involvement in the wage sector. Although most women in Booni continue to perform agricultural labour, a number of them are now employed in various educational institutions, health care centres and development organizations like the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP), the Chitral Area Development Project (CADP) and the Social Welfare Organization (SWO). A number of women are also involved in the informal sector, selling products like tomatoes and Chitrali hats[107].

With more and more women entering school and the paid labour market, a shift in work patterns is evident. Women with no schooling or women who are unable to find employment are taking over the tasks for which their daughters were once responsible in past generations. Thus the older women's workload has increased. Furthermore, a shift in family structure to nuclear families is putting added pressure on women's farm work. With more husbands from nuclear families being employed outside the home, women have to perform men's farming responsibilities in addition to their own agricultural work.

A consequence of these socio-economic changes is the shifting personal and group values and goals. The way women perceive themselves and the world, in light of all these changes, is, in turn, impacting on long held cultural values and beliefs. The meaning which schooling holds for the local people, particularly the women, has been influenced greatly by the changing socio-economic circumstances in the valley. What meaning do local women give to the social and economic changes and how have they come to view schooling in this whole process?

Schooling and Work: The Early Years

Financial Support and Status

A major consequence of the shifting economy in Booni has been the increasing value placed on money to buy household goods. For most people in the valley, it is virtually impossible to survive solely on produce from subsistence farming. Cash incomes are also necessary for local people so that they can participate in the development process. For example, money is needed to buy school uniforms and supplies and to pay for medical treatment, clothing and transport. The changing economy is summarized in Shora's perceptions:

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[107]Local embroidered caps made by the women.

> The old way of life is changing. There are many changes. Money has increased...I[108] buy my clothes and food from the *bazaar*. There are shopkeepers now in the *bazaar*. We are getting more crops because we are able to buy manure from the *bazaar*. (field interview)

Fatima's perceptions depict the local people's views of schooling as the key to being able to participate in this changing lifestyle:

> If anyone gets [formal] education, of course they get employment - they get money. Before education, we were in need of dresses and cloth. Now, because of education, we have everything and we have employment.... In the olden days, we were not developed. (field interview)

Initially, when schooling for girls was not yet common, families viewed schooling for their sons to be important so that these boys could find wage labour and, thereby, provide financial support to their families. Fatima, a 55 year old mother, explains why it was important to send her son, Hasan, and not her daughter to school:

> She [my daughter] had to get married and go to another home; of course, Hasan is my own and he has to support me....for me, Hasan is useful because he is in my house....Whatever I thought, according to that, Hasan got his matric - now he is earning; he bears the expenses of the household - we do not have lands so he earns for us; the eldest son can earn for himself. The other son can earn for himself and for his wife and family. (field interview)

Families also thought that sending their sons to school would make it easier for them to get work in "faraway places like the cities" (field interview with Sultana). Schooling was also perceived to be valuable for boys since it taught them to read. As Sultana explains: "Even though *Allah* does take care of them, I still thought at least they [my sons] would be able to read something and go somewhere" (field interview).

Not only was financial security an important reason for a family's desire to provide schooling for their sons, but it was important for sons to get well-paid, high status jobs, like office work. It appears that the community perceived office work to be similar to work done by *lals*. Parents would advise their sons that, if they did not go to

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[108]Although Shora says "I," it is probably her husband or another man in the house who brings the clothes and food from the *bazaar*.

school, they would remain illiterate and would have to work as *mazdurs*[109] on other people's land. Ashraf, a 45 year old widow, shares the advice she gave her son when he was young:

> I used to tell him that if he does not go to school he will remain illiterate. I told him, "the time will come wh[illegible] people will ask you to do their work, like plough in their fields and pay you *mazduri* [daily wages]. They will ask you to take the cows manure out of the stables. They will ask you to harvest their crops." I used to tell him that he would do whatever work the *Whakahan*[110]people are doing today if he did not go to school. (field interview)

As families started to observe boys with schooling getting employment in areas which they perceived to be of high status, they too wished this for their own sons. When I asked Fatima why her parents wanted her brothers to go to school she said, "[my parents] just sent the boys by looking at others in the area - they were getting good jobs, that is why they sent my brothers to school" (field interview). Although Fatima does not mention the kind of "good jobs" her brothers would get from schooling, Naseema's comments about the kind of work her husband would be doing if he had not completed his matriculation point to the status associated with different types of work in the village: "My husband has completed his matric...[today] he works at a health centre...if he was illiterate, he would have been a labourer and collected wood" (field interview). Schooling was thus perceived as an avenue to move away from work which involved manual labour.

Gender Structures: Girls are Excluded From Paid Employment

Initially, the idea of girls working in the wage sector was not considered for a number of reasons. Firstly, there were no opportunities for women. No schooling was available for girls so no relation was made between girls' schooling and employment. There was also an absence of areas within the paid labour market for women to work. Secondly, women's space was restricted to the household where they were expected to take care of farming, housework and children. Sultana's story sums up women's lives during this period: "There was nothing [no school and no paid

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[109]Manual labourers who earn low wages.

[110]*Whakans* are refugees from Afghanistan. After coming to Pakistan during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, most of these refugees have taken over menial labour tasks which many Chitralis, particularly those from upper caste families, do not want to do because they perceive it as low status work which was done by the *Chirmugh* (cf. Chapter IV "Historical Perspectives of Pakistan and the Chitral District).

employment] for the women; we were doing our household work" (field interview). A final impediment to women not being involved in wage labour was the local people's belief that women earning money was *haram* -- against Islam.[111] Even when schooling and paid employment opened up to women, the majority of people did not think this was important or useful for women.

A shift in perspectives is evident today with girls' schooling becoming more common and with positions opening up for women in wage labour, particularly in the formal sector. While there are families who continue to recognize schooling and paid labour as important for their sons only, in the transition from past to present, many families have shifted their perspectives and now value schooling and paid labour for their daughters as well.

Schooling and Work: The Current Situation

A Sense of Regret: Mothers and Daughters Speak

A value of schooling because of its connection to wage labour is evident across the generations. Women who have never been to school express much regret because they feel that this has prevented them from doing work other than agricultural work. Women who did not send some of their daughters to school also express regret about their daughters having missed out on the opportunity to work and earn money. Daughters who did not go to school when girls' schooling was first established in the community are also sorry that they never attended school. They blame their parents for not giving them the opportunity to acquire formal education which would have further helped them to get paid employment. Most of these women view schooling as an avenue for their daughters to gain opportunities that mothers themselves never had. They have observed or heard through cultural networking about girls who have been to school and who are, today, working and earning money, and they desire similar opportunities for their daughters. As Shahnaz, who was not very keen on attending school, says,

> I did not want to go to school....My parents used to give me examples of my teachers. They used to say, "look, your teachers have become teachers because of their education. You will also become a teacher like them if you complete your education." (field interview)

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[111]Contrary to what some Muslims believe as *haram*, during Prophet Muhammed's (P.B.U.H) lifetime, Muslim women were involved in business practices. The Prophet's first wife, for example, was a tradesperson.

Fatima never had the opportunity to go to school. Her two older daughters did not go to school either because there was no concept of girls' schooling when they were young. However, Fatima's two younger daughters went to school, but one of them left after class four because the family had financial difficulties. The youngest daughter, Khadija, completed her matriculation. In the following passage, Fatima speaks about the value she placed on girls' schooling before and how this has changed t

> ...[a]t that time, I did not understand the value of education....There were people at that time, however, who did know the value of education for girls; now they [these girls] are getting money and employment....when girls go to school, they can get jobs easily....[now] Khadija has got her education, she has a job....she is independent; she can spend her own money; she can manage on her own. (field interview)

Women with no schooling thus want their daughters to go to school because they believe their daughters will have better income and employment opportunities.

A Sense of Hope: Daughters Speak About Schooling

Most of the young women currently attending school also place strong value on schooling as a means of getting paid employment. As women's space within the community has extended to school and to the wage sector, school girls are being exposed to other formally educated women with paid employment and they aspire to become like these women. Discussions at home or in the villages about the promise of employment with schooling appears to influence girls' perceptions of employment as a primary reason for going to school. Shahnaz, the young woman described earlier who did not like school, explains that she changed her mind in middle school because she began to think about her future employment after observing her own teacher:

> I started to take more interest in middle school because I started to think about my future employment. I really wanted to be a teacher...I used to see other teachers -- my teachers -- and I wanted to become like them. (field interview)

Most young women today go to school with the hope of securing paid employment. Right from a young age girls view schooling as a way to get employment. They

perceive participation in the cash economy as the key to earning and controlling an income and to gaining high status. However, their aspirations often come into conflict with cultural beliefs and the realities of village life.

Earning and Controlling an Income: Conflicts Between Desires and Cultural Beliefs

Shifts in gender structures

Cultural shifts are evident in the valley as more and more women express a desire to have funds at their disposal and which they can control, a role which has primarily been accorded only to men in the valley. The women share their perceptions on the importance of having a personal income. When their husbands find employment away from the village, particularly in other parts of Pakistan, women often depend on remittances which may not always arrive on time. If the women are in desparate need of finances, they need to write to their husbands to send them money which can take a long time to arrive. Azada's husband works in Lahore. She is also earning an income as a school teacher. She compares her situation to a woman who is not earning any money.

> It is obvious that my life is different from the life of a woman...who does not have a job....[W]e are able to stand on our own feet ...Over here...people think of employment so that no one becomes dependent on the other; a wife does not become dependent on her husband; a sister does not become dependent on her brother. Generally in Chitral, husbands live far away so at least if we earn we can spend money on ourselves and at home. We do not need to write and ask our husbands when they are in Lahore; it is too far away for them to send us money. (field interview with Azada)

Even in instances where husbands take up employment in the valley, women express a desire for an income which they can control. When the women ask their husbands for money, they do not usually get it right away. Thus, the women want to earn money for themselves and use it at their own convenience so they do not have "to wait for the men" (field interview with Naseema).

In addition, most women who are dependent on others, usually male household members, for money and who must, therefore, be accountable for this money do not have the independence to spend this money as they desire. Naseema, who is not employed in the wage sector, thinks that if women were earning an income they would "not have to worry about anything...[and could] spend according to their own desires - they [could] pay their taxi fares" (field interview). Women, therefore, desire a cash

income which they can spend as they wish because they do not want to depend on male household members.

Finally, women think that earning an income is important for personal satisfaction. Azada shares how she feels about earning and being able to spend this money:

> I can do as I wish with my money - if there is someone needy [a neighbour], I can give him/her at least 5 Rs. Other women who are illiterate [and thus, by implication, not employed], even if their husbands earn 10,000 Rs/month, they are not able to give a needy person even 10 Rs....If I give up my employment and my husband is earning and if he gives me 4000-5000 Rs/ mth to spend, I will not enjoy it as I do when I teach and earn 3000 Rs from my own hard work. I feel happy from my own hard work. (field inteview)

Overall, women in Booni perceive earning cash income as valuable.

Family connections and family support

Financial independence is also perceived as valuable in a way connected to children. Many women feel that they do not contribute to their children's well-being when fathers are the sole contributers of a cash income. This is reflected in Naseema's thoughts on women's income:

> Women [who earn and control these earnings] can buy anything according to what their children wish. They can spend according to their children's desires; we [women who do not earn and to not control any cash income] have to wait for the men - if they give anything to the children that is good; we cannot give anything to the children -- we cannot give them a single rupee. (field interview)

Women like Naseema who have not had the opportunity to earn a salary aspire greatly for their daughters to have this chance so that they can "pay for [their own] children's expenses easily..." (field interview). For most women, a personal income is particularly valuable with regards to their children's schooling. Schooling is dependent on the cash economy for its function in terms of books, uniforms and, in some instances, fees. Women express a desire to participate in providing for their children's school books and uniforms. Those women who are not earning feel it is important for their daughters to have employment so that when they have their own chidren, they

"will not have to worry [and] will be able to afford their [children's] clothes, books, *copies*[112], and...send them to school easily" (field interview with Naseema).

Many mothers also believe that, after receiving formal education, their daughters will get jobs and will provide financial support to their parents. Girls who are going to school also believe that after completing school they will be able to financially support their parents. This view is expressed by Yasmin: "Now I am in high school....After five years, I will get a job....Then my parents will be old. I will give them a helping hand. I will pay for their expenses" (field interview).

As the dependency on the cash economy is increasing in the village, some women also see paid employment as a way of helping their husbands to provide financial support for the family. These women feel that, by doing housework, they are not contributing anything to the family because they are not earning money for their homes. This is apparent in Naseema's views. She thinks that if she were employed, she would have made her husband's burden lighter; she could have bought her own clothes and soap, and she would not have had to ask him to buy anything for her. She believes that in this way she "would have shared the expenses with him" (field interview with Naseema). For women like Naseema, rather than viewing employment as a way of acheiving financial independence, they see it as a way of sharing household expenses.

Women from the older generation who have been widowed also place a lot of value on cash incomes from formal sector work because of the hardships they have endured. Many of these women usually have to depend on their relatives for support or sell their livestock to generate some form of income. They feel that if they had received formal education, they could have earned money for themselves and could have, therefore, been able to support their families without much hardship and without depending on others. This feeling is particularly evident when women have been widowed at a young age. Ashraf is about 50 years old. She is from a generation when schooling was unavailable for girls. Her husband died about fifteen years ago, and she was left with the responsibility of raising five small children alone as none of her in-laws were living with her. She only had two *chakourams* of land. She explains the financial difficulties she has endured:

> My husband died about fifteen years ago....I had no money....[I had not been to school]. We only have two chakourams of land....At that time, I did not eat well; I had no food or clothes. Life was very bad -- it

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[112]*Copies* refers to scribblers (books for writing).

> was the worst type of life....I was very worried about my daughters because they were young....I could not afford to send them to school....I could not afford to buy them clothes....I (had) no crops to sell so how could I have sent them to school? I used to do a lot of work in the fields like harvesting, threshing and cutting wood. I had no money to pay for a *mazdur* [a labourer]. (field interview with Ashraf)

Although Ashraf has endured many hardships and wishes she had been to school, if she had a choice, she would still rather send her sons to school so that they could support her. She explains,

> I would send my son to school [instead of my daughter]....My daughter would go to another family. My son will get married to another girl and she will come to my home and I will ask her to work in my house. (field interview with Ashraf)

Thus the expectations which some women like Ashraf have is that men should provide financial support to the family and women should perform household and agricultural work.

Gender structure barriers

Discrepancies are apparent between women's desires for spending a cash income and what usually happens to income earned by employed women. Very few women are in positions where they are able to spend their money as they desire. Most income-earning women, especially those who are married, must give a large part of their earnings -- if not all -- to the men in the household. In some families the money is given to the husbands and in others it is given to the father-in-laws. Thus, the women continue to be financially dependent on the men. Moreover, some of these women are still accountable for their expenditures with whatever money they are allowed to keep.

Because women's mobility is restricted by socio-cultural norms, they are not permitted to go into the *bazaar*. They do not have much say in choosing the items they wish to buy as a male member of the household is usually sent to purchase the goods. Ironically, nowadays, there are "travelling salesmen" who come into the various hamlets of the village selling their wares to the women. I mention this as "ironic" because of a powerful statement Zarina made once as we passed one of these men selling his wares to the women: "What kind of *purdah* system is this?"

Although mothers value schooling as a way for their daughters to earn an income which would support their dependent mothers and fathers, a cultural contradiction is

apparent because, in practice, daughters are still not recognized as the "breadwinners" of their immediate family (their parents and brothers and sisters). Young women do not live for a long time in their parents' homes after completing their schooling. They get married and any money they may earn is usually contributed to their in-laws' home. Furthermore, when the women go to their husbands homes, they are not necessarily allowed to give any of their earned money to their own parents. One woman, Sakeena, whose daughters have not been to school, spoke quite strongly of sacrificing money to send her daughter-in-law to school rather than her own daughter. Sakeena's daughter-in-law is only nine years old. She still lives with her parents and is attending school. Sakeena describes why she would spend money to educate her daughter-in-law if she lived with Sakeena:

> If my daughter-in-law had come here, then I would have paid for her education....I want my own benefits from her. My daughters would have earned for other men; my daughter-in-law would have earned for me....I spent money on her to get education, so she has to give me money. (field interview)

If her daughter-in-law were to find employment, Sakeena would receive the money; but if Sakeena's own daughter were employed, the money would go to her daughter's in-laws.

Another conflict which arises from women's desires for money which they can earn and control stems from their contentment to depend on men to make decisions. Some women do not want this to change and this is primarily due to cultural reasons. Azada, who is relatively independent when it comes to controlling her earnings, does not want to participate in any decision regarding her daughter's marriage. She says,

> I will not say a single word in this respect. It is my husband's wish if he wants to arrange the marriage or not....I cannot make decisions because afterwards, some incidents happen for which the father has to go out -- there could be something to discuss, medication or some unforseen thing which needs to be discussed. In spite of (women being able to) understand these things, in our area it is not a custom for a woman to go out for those things and to give their opinions. That is why the responsibility is given to the brother or the father....The woman must stay in her own place, within her own right. (field interview with Azada)

Furthermore, many women are also afraid of making decisions because they fear breaking cultural traditions and being blamed in case their decisions led to an

unfavourable outcome. They also fear that this could lead to a divorce and, hence, to having no where to go.

Overall, there is a strong and positive shift in the women's perceptions of girls' schooling and employment as a way of having a cash income at their disposal which they can control. Changing socio-economic patterns are bringing about a number of conflicts between traditional cultural values and newly introduced values in the village.

Conflicting Views of Women's Working World

Status: Traditional and Modern Life

A big change which has resulted from the developing cash economy is the sense of hierarchy and status associated with different types of women's work. What comes through strongly in the women's perceptions is the community's negative view of the agricultural economy which has sustained and nurtured the local people for generations and in which women have played a vital role. While money and formal sector employment are being increasingly valued, agricultural work is being devalued and seen as unimportant. Status is associated with work in the formal sector because it is perceived as "clean" and easy work. The community also perceives this type of work as being done "sitting in a chair" and attaches status to this notion which in itself seems to suggest a figurative hierarchy. Shora reflects on how her life might have been with schooling:

> If I had gone to school, I think my life would have been better today. I could have sat on the chair....I would not have gotten dirty; I would have been clean. I would have sat on the chair being a teacher or an LHV [lady health visitor]....I would have liked to be a teacher or an LHV because...they are earning money. (field interview)

Women who have not had the opportunity to go to school feel that they would have led a better life if they had had schooling. They believe that they "would have gotten rid of work...[like] collect[ing] fodder and graz[ing] the cattle" (field interview with Shora). They would have been able to work in an office, in a "clean" environment, and been able to earn money.

Working in a "clean" environment is also important for young women today. They perceive their mothers' lifestyle as a hindrance to being clean because they are always taking care of cattle, doing household work and looking after children. They are always busy, and hence do not get the chance to wash their clothes or take a bath.

Azada, who has been teaching for many years, values her work because of cleanliness. She shares her views on her life and on the life of mothers in the community:

> [F]or five to six hours, I [teach at] school so I remain clean. I wear clean clothes and am in a clean environment....Our mothers are grazing the cattle, taking care of the children and washing the utensils. They sometimes go for two to three days without having a bath or four to five days without going out of the house or washing their clothes....Our mothers are at home; they do not get a chance to wash their clothes or to take a bath. We can at least wash ourselves and our clothes because of going to school. We take more care of keeping our nails and hair clean. (field interview with Azada)

What appears to emerge from Azada's perceptions is that appearance and cleanliness are necessary only if they work outside the home. Because mothers do not have to go anywhere, it is not important, therefore, whether they wash themselves and wear clean clothes. Women like Azada who work in the formal sector must keep themselves clean because the type of environment in which they work requires this of them.

A pattern which I began to observe when Zarina and I spoke with women who had no schooling was the way they compared their work to their perceptions of our work. Many women would tell us that we had been to school, therefore, we were clean and we were able to work in a clean environment. For example, when I asked Sakeena how she felt her life might have been had she been to school, she began to compare her lifestyle to what she perceived to be my lifestyle. She said,

> I am dirty and you [researcher] are clean; my work standard is not clean like yours. I work with the cattle and the cow dung. I am dirty. We are not like you. You can sit and read and live a clean life. Our life is very difficult. (field interview with Sakeena)

What comes through quite powerfully in Sakeena's perceptions and what many other women like Sakeena think about their own agricultural and domestic work is that it is dirty and animal-like. When I spoke with the women and, particularly, when they compared their work to what they perceived to be my work, I felt that they were almost ashamed of their lifestyle which has been part of their cultural tradition for generations. Women with no schooling, consequently, speak very strongly about sending their daughters to school so they can "sit in a chair," work in a clean environmen, earn money and, thereby, not "work with the animals and the cow dung" (field interview with Sultana) as their mothers have done.

Parental influence also appears to be important in the way young women with schooling have come to perceive their formal education in light of paid employment. Mothers advise their daughters to go to school so that they will not have to "graze the cattle" (field interview with Shahnaz). Mothers also tell their daughters to go to school and not to stay at home and work with them because they do not want their daughters to have lifestyles similar to theirs. Many young women, like Rubina, express a desire not to live like their mothers: "If I do not get employment, then I will wash dishes and shed tears" (field interview). Furthermore, girls are being influenced by their exposure to lifestyles of women with paid employment.

In addition to household and agricultural labour being seen as unclean, it is also viewed as boring, tedious and offering no excitement. As Gulshan says,

> [a]fter completing my *matric*, I became bored...at home....I was always busy with work....I grazed the cattle, cleaned the house and collected the fodder....I kept myself clean at home, but not like when I was going to school....When I went to school, I used to keep myself clean. Being at home, I do not care. (field interview)

Women miss their school life and wish they could return to that lifestyle again. They find school work less demanding compared to their household duties. Gulshan summarizes the appeal of school life:

> I wanted to go back to school [after class 10]. In school, all I had to do was read. At home, I had to work hard with my mother. I missed being with my friends. Those friends who live in my village, I was able to meet on some occasions, [like weddings and at the *Jamatkhana*]. My friends who lived far away, I could not meet them. (field interview)

Thus schooling represents a place where girls feel connected with the larger community and where they do not have to engage in manual labour which they find boring, dirty and difficult.

A result of the value placed on formal sector work is that many women with schooling do not want to do household work because they perceive it as "dirty work." However, many are compelled to do this work because the formal sector cannot accomodate the number of women seeking employment opportunities. This is creating conflicts at the household level as a number of women with no schooling often end up doing the hard and "dirty" work while the women with schooling do not put in as much effort. The value of money, work in the paid labour market and work in a "clean

environment" seems to be resulting in a new stratification system in which the traditional work of women within the household realm and agricultural production is devalued.

Formal Sector Work: An Easier Life?

Opportunities for women in the paid labour market have also resulted in certain perceptions of the workload in the domestic and in the wage sector. A certain understanding of this workload is evident across the generations given the women's own work experiences. Many women who work primarily at home and on the farm think that if they had been to school their lives would have been easier. They would have been able to get paid employment and, consequently, would not have had to do as much work as they do nowadays. They perceive that women who teach in schools, for example, just sit for five to six hours in a chair. Shora shares this view:

> With schooling, I would not have had to do as much work as I do now [at home]....I have too much work to do in the fields....The job is easy for teachers....[If I was a teacher], I would have sat on a chair....I am not educated -- who would allow me to sit in the hostel instead of [the matron]. (field interview)

Shora perceives teaching to be easy because of her daughter 's experiences at school. Rabia, Shora's daughter, has told her mother that some of the teachers at her school do not teach very much. Thus, Rabia's mother thinks that "working as a teacher at the government school is easy because they do not teach well -- they do whatever they want in school; whenever they want to teach, they teach; whenever they don't want to teach, they don't" (field interview with Shora).

A contradiction is apparent in Rabia's mother perceptions on why she wants to teach and in the way she thinks the teachers should teach at the school. Shora is unhappy with the way the teachers teach at the government school and she thinks that the teachers should work harder and teach better. Yet, as mentioned earlier, she would have liked the kind of work which did not require much effort and where she could have "sat in a chair." Therefore, even though some women want paid employment in the pattern which is currently followed and which appears to be easy, they are not satisfied with the way women in desired professions, like teaching, are performing their responsibilities.

Whenever women in the sample expressed a desire to work in the formal sector, I asked them who would take care of the household and agricultural work which they

were currently doing. Some women responded that other women in the household would take over these responsibilities. Other women said that they would do the domestic work when they came back in the evening. When I asked these women if this would only increase their workload and make it difficult, they thought otherwise:

> In the morning, I would go to work [by implication, the wage labour market] and when I came back in the evening, I would do everything [all the household labour]. I would like this. I would not find it difficult. (field interview with Shora)

Many women send their daughters to school because they believe their daughters' lives will be easier. Shora thinks that if her daughter stayed at home, she would do more work. She thinks that by going to school, her daughter does not have a lot of work to do and she has "no cares" (field interview with Shora). Mothers probably perceive that their daughters do not have much work to do because they are at school almost seven hours in the day.

However, while many mothers share similar views, they still expect their daughters to contribute to the household before and after school. Most girls find it very difficult to cope with her school work and her household responsibilities. In fact, a number do not want to continue their formal education because they cannot coordinate her household and school work. Generation conflicts as well as school/home conflicts are, therefore, apparent. Mothers, who have not been to school, do not understand the type of work school demands from their daughters. Furthermore, the schoolwork done by girls when they come home has no relevance to the work which they are expected to do at home.

The realities faced by women who work in the paid labour market and then return home to do contribute to the household economy reveal that the double work load is not as easy as women like Shora seem to perceive. Roshan, for example, teaches from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., depending on the seasons, and is also expected to contribute to the household labour before and after she leaves for school. Roshan finds this extremely difficult because she has to get up very early in the morning to milk and feed the cattle, to clean the house and to make breakfast. When she returns from school, she has to take care of household tasks and farm work before she can begin preparing for her next day's lesson. She describes her daily routine:

> Early in the morning I wake up for prayers; then I prepare breakfast for the household; then I get dressed and go to school; according to the

> timetable, I teach for about five hours. When I come back from the school, I have lunch which has already been prepared. They I wash the household's clothes. After that I go to collect fodder for the cows. Then I start to make dinner for the household. After dinner, I wash off the utensils and then prepare myself for the next days' lesson. (field interview with Roshan)

Some women like Azada perceive their work in the formal sector to be harder than their mother's household work. As a teacher, Azada has a big responsibility to teach children values and to "make sure she brings up a [child] well and give the child back to her [the child's] parents as a complete person" (field interview with Azada). In comparison, she talks about her mother's work: "My mother's job is to cook food, milk cows and graze goats -- how is this difficult?" (field interview with Azada).

A conflict in the way women with no paid employment and women working in the wage sector perceive their workload is, therefore, apparent. Azada, who probably did not contribute too much to household labour having been in school and then in the wage labour market, thinks that farm and household work is easy. Furthermore, Azada has also lived for awhile at her relatives' home while she worked in a village about 60 kilometers from Booni. In this setting, she had minimal household tasks as guests are culturally not expected to work in the hosts' homes.

Realities Faced by Women in Search of Paid Employment

Unavailability of Paid Employment

The perception which many women in Booni Valley have is that once they leave school, it will be easy for them to find work in the formal sector. Many girls are not getting married as early as they used to and, hence, expect to work in the wage sector for a few years before marriage and remain in the wage sector after they are married. However, underlying factors, like a saturated formal sector, prevent women from being able to fulfil their desires.

Most women who complete their formal education in Booni are joining the large pool of the "educated unemployed." The valley's economy is unable to absorb the increasing number of women with schooling who expect to get into the paid labour market. For example, there are about 425 girls enrolled in the girls high school today and there are only about 25 positions of employment within the valley available for women and these are all currently occupied. Although centres like the Aga Khan

Maternity Home are being developed in Booni, it is only possible to hire a few women for positions in these institutions.

The areas of paid employment open to women are also limited. Women are concentrated mainly in teaching and health professions. Within the health professions, they work mainly as lady health visitors (LHVs). There are also a few positions available for them in women's organizations of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme and the Chitral Area Development Project, as well as the government social welfare organization. There are no women in administration apart from the school headmistresses and women generally do not work as *mazduris* or labourers.

It was interesting, however, to listen to women from the older generation speak with certainty and confidence that their daughters would get paid employment if they went to school. These women always compared their daughters situation to circumstances which existed a number of years ago when girls' schooling and employment were not common. However, circumstances which existed previously and which exist today are very different. For example, when positions of employment were being created for women to work as LHVs in the health centres, there was no one from the entire district qualified to do this work. Women had to be brought from urban centres like Karachi to occupy the positions. As girls' schooling became common, the Aga Khan Health Services began sending any girl who had completed her matriculation and who was interested in working as an LHV to the "down district" for training. The main criteria the girls had to fulfil was the ability to speak with confidence; their academic performance was not given much consideration. It was also easier to find employment in the teaching profession before because there were not many women who were qualified to take up these positions. These situations existed until the late 1980s.

Today, however, there are more women applying for positions than are available. Gulshan is one of many unsuccessful women who have been in search of employment for a long time. She explains that she was one of "20[0] women who recently] applied for four [teaching positions] at the government school" (field interview with Gulshan). The criteria for hiring women has also changed. Previously, the interviews were not as hard for the women because the questions were related mainly to religion. Today, there is strong emphasis placed on an individual's academic achievement and certification. The government and Aga Khan schools also require a person to have religious knowledge. The method of hiring used by institutions like the Aga Khan Education Service has also changed. Currently, AKES, P (Chitral) also requires prospective employees to write an exam which tests their secular and religious

knowledge. This system has been introduced because of cheating during exams which makes it difficult to judge an individual's academic level. The shift which has taken place with regards to hiring is described by Shabnum, an employed LHV. She compares her personal experience of finding a job around 1988 to the difficulties faced by young women in search of paid employment today:

> I was waiting for my *matric* results. At that time there were no local LHVs so they were sending women who were interested -- they were not looking at marks -- there was a shortage in Chitral. They were only looking at the residence of the women. [Recently], in Booni, for example, 20 - 25 women came for an interview for [LHV] training and none of them was given a chance. From the Mulkhow area, 30-35 women came for the interview. There were only four positions available....It is not easy to get employment...because there are no jobs available. (field interview with Shabnum)

The unavailablility of employment is causing many women to become discouraged as they have gone to school with the promise of employment in mind. Furthermore, these women have had the opportunity to experience life outside the household while they were at school and they feel badly because they can no longer continue this pattern of leaving the household. Their feelings of discouragement are also intensified because they thought that with schooling they would find jobs and, therefore, lead a more fulfilling and exciting life than their mothers. Rabia recently completed class 12 through distance education and has tried to find wage labour. However, she has not been able to find any paid work. She shares her experience looking for employment and how she feels about not finding work:

> I have tried to look for employment -- I tried at the social welfare office over here. There were many girls who applied and I felt very bad when I was not hired....I feel my future is *thabar* [ruined]. If I remain this way, my future will be destroyed....I feel bad for myself when I am at home and they [other women] are going to work. I feel bad to do all the housework. (field interview with Rabia)

Many girls, like Rabia, become bored staying at home and doing the housework. They even feel a sense of hopelessness about their future and think their schooling has been wasted.

Another conflict which arises when girls do not find paid employment is that their mothers, who have placed so much value on schooling for paid employment, feel that there has been no value in their daughters' education. They also think that their

daughters cannot do the housework well enough because they have not learned this in school. This contradicts their initial perceptions, which I described previously in the section on schooling, that girls with schooling are able to clean and cook better. The mothers also feel that they could have easily used their daughters' help in the time that their daughters were going to school. One mother whom I met does not want to send her young daughter to school because she sees no value in it. She says that there are no jobs available so there is no point in admitting her in school. She feels she could rather use her daughter's help at home because sending her to school would be a bad investiment of her daughter's time. Thus, educated unemployment is resulting in contradictions and tensions for many women and girls who have viewed schooling as an instant key to paid employment.

Cheating and "Qualifications Inflation"[113]

Two problems which are resulting from a shortage in employment opportunities are cheating and "qualifications inflation." As mentioned earlier, the criteria for getting into the wage labour nowadays depends highly on a person's certification. For example, a woman who has only completed her matriculation or even her intermediate certification, "F.A." or "F.Sc.," as it is locally known, is less likely to find work than a woman who has a bachelor's degree or even a master's degree. Women's aspirations to complete higher education are consequently increasing. Gulshan, for example, knew that with her matriculation she would not be able to find employment. She was interested in pursuing higher studies so that she could get qualifications which would increase her chances of being hired. She says,

> [a]fter *matric*, I really wanted to continue my studies; I was not thinking about employment after doing my *matric*. I was interested in completing higher studies. I thought that with an "F.A." and a "B.A." [Bachelor of Arts], it would be easier for me to get employment as I would be more qualified. (field interview with Gulshan)

However, with more and more women getting their bachelor's and their master's degrees, "qualifications inflation" has become prevalent in the community. Even women who are highly qualified are unable to find paid employment and are still at home. Thus, Shahnaz explains, "[i]t is hard [to find a job in Booni]....Girls who have

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[113]A situation when the qualifications required for certain jobs rises at an accelarated pace.

done class 14 [Bachelor's Degree] are in their homes -- they do not have employment" (field interview with Shahnaz).

A major factor contributing to "qualifications inflation" is the high number of women who have specializations in the same discipline. Most women complete their higher studies in humanities with specializations in religion and Urdu. Until two years ago when science was introduced, humanities was the only subject area available in the school. As indicated in the section on schooling, girls find it easier to get higher grades in humanities than in science and it is possible to study humanities through distance education. Women often told me that they study religion because they have been learning it all their lives and, therefore, find it easy. Paradoxically, by specializing in subject areas which they do not very difficult, the girls think that they can obtain the necessary marks to pursue further studies or to get paid employment.

Another effect of the shortage of opportunities for employment as well as the emphasis placed on academic excellence is the school girls' dependence on cheating to obtain marks. Although young women in my sample seemed ashamed to cheat, they feel that they have no other choice if they want to compete with their peers for employment or higher learning opportunities. This is summarized in the following passage by a school teacher, Azada, who explains the realities of cheating to get paid employment.

> For example,...there is one girl who has worked hard, but out of 1000 marks only gets 300 and...there is one girl who has cheated and gets 700 marks; during the time of the interviews, they will not see that this one has worked hard and gotten 300 marks and this one has cheated and gotten 700 marks. They will give the job to the person with the highest marks. (field interview with Azada)

To summarize, the few jobs which are available to women in the valley have been taken. When one of these positions becomes available, there is a great demand for it because the number of women with formal education in the valley in high. However, it is usually those women with qualifications, like a bachelor's degree. or even a master's degree, who have the best chance of being hired. Many girls cheat to get through the low quality education system and to obtain degrees so that they can join the pool of women who stand a chance to secure a job in the formal sector. The competition for such limited positions in the formal sector is also high because most women specialize in the same discipline.

Gender Structures: "Women's Work is Household Work"

Another barrier to paid employment faced by the women is that their husbands do not allow them to work. Ashraf's sister-in-law, Safiyya, who was present during the interview with Ashraf, shared with us why her brother is against women working in the wage sector: "He is against women earning money from employment; if his wife brings home money he feels that it is against Islam - he feels it is *haram* [forbidden]" (field notes, conversation). This statement points once again to an interpretation of Islam as the basis of gender relationships where men are seen as the financial supporters of the family.

Some women are also expected not to sacrifice their household work for paid employment when there is no one else at home to perform these duties. Shahnaz has not even tried to look for employment because "there will be no one at home to work with [her] mother" (field interview). Roshan also shares her difficulties of finding a job: "My in-laws were not very pleased....My husband is the only son. That is why they did not take interest. There is no [other daughter-in-law] to do the household work for them" (field interview). Roshan's example reveals both women's traditional work responsibilities and what is expected of women once they are married.

Streamlining Women into "Stereotypical" Professions

The school's role

As I have already indicated, women in Booni are limited to the following professions: teaching; health care; and women's organizations. This is due to the formal education system, cultural and financial reasons as well as parental decisions. As mentioned previously, most girls in Booni study humanities. This subject area qualifies them to pursue higher learning for the teaching profession, for LHV training, which they must complete in the "down district", or for work in women's organizations. In the past science subjects have not been offered in the schools which has made it difficult for women to join professions like engineering and medicine. Previously, only a handful of women have had the opportunity to study science away from the valley as cultural reasons and financial difficulties have restrained most women. Although science is offered today, many girls still opt not to pursue this subject as there are no institutions in the valley where girls can continue studying science after secondary school. Many girls are compelled to do distance education because cultural, financial and parental decisions prevent them from going to "regular" institutions in the "down district" to study. The limited resources available to women to

pursue subjects in areas other than humanities, therefore, restricts them to only a few areas of employment in the formal sector.

Even in the field of humanities, girls are unable to study anything they wish. Shahnaz wants to be a lawyer, but she cannot fulfil her desire. To get this training, she has to go to the "down district." There is no one at home to help her mother, so she cannot leave. She shares her reality which is common to many other women in Booni:

> I would like to be a lawyer, but I cannot....It is not possible over here because the education system is not good....To be a lawyer, I must go to a "regular" institution....I cannot do it privately [through distance education]. I have to study privately because there is no one to help my mother. (field interview with Shahnaz)

Another element in the school system which reinforces women's entry into stereotypical professions is the humanities curriculum. This curriculum encourages women to enter professions where they can be caregivers. Girls are required to take home economics where they are supposed to learn about nutrition and home management. Furthermore, pictures in the books of female nurses and teachers and male doctors and engineers reinforce traditional job sectors of women and men, where women's opportunities lie mainly in the caregiving and nurturing professions.

The community's role

Women are also streamlined into the teaching and health professions as well as into women's organizations because these areas of work are perceived to be culturally acceptable by the community. However, within these professions, some jobs are more culturally accepted than others which further limits the areas within which women are able to work. Women's entry into the paid labour market is usually controlled by male household members, in particular fathers, older brothers, husbands and father-in-laws.

Conflicting views are apparent about the areas of employment where girls of today's generation want to work and where the men and, at times, the older women feel it is appropriate for young women to work. Most of these conflicts are focussed around women's mobility and what families observe as acceptable space for women outside the household. Men and older women in this culture prefer their daughters, sisters and wives to work within the valley. Furthermore, they think that women should be in the teaching profession because they can easily observe *purdah*. Sultana explains why she wants her daughter to be a teacher.

> I think it is alright for my daughter to get employment,...[but] I would not like her to go away from Booni to work.....I would like my daughter to be a teacher because of *purdah*. She can be around women in girls' school. There are always women there so she can obey the veil system which is our culture, our tradition. An officer [by implication someone who works with men] lady has to sit with the officer men [so she cannot observe *purdah*]. (field interview with Sultana)

If women enter the teaching profession they do not have to go far away for training and they only have to travel to and from the school as they did when they were students. Furthermore, in this profession, women interact mainly with other women.

While there are some young women in the valley who desire to enter the teaching profession because they feel uncomfortable travelling far away, there are many women who are in this profession because they have feel compelled to enter it. When Roshan finished school, she had a choice between teaching and going for LHV training. She really wanted to become an LHV. However, this profession requires a woman to leave the valley and go to cities in the "down district", like Karachi, for training. Because there was no man in her household who could accompany her to the down district," she opted for teaching. She describes her experience:

> I got accepted...to get LHV training or...to teach in Chitral. I chose to teach because I could remain in Chitral. To become an LHV one has to go outside of Chitral [for training]....My brother was not able to come with me outside of Chitral. (field interview with Roshan)

Although the assumption is that women can stay in the village and observe *purdah* with no difficulties in the teaching profession, the reality is that teachers are often transferred from one locality to another. Furthermore, all the teaching positions in Booni are currently filled up, so women who want to teach must search elsewhere for employment. Shahnaz, who wants to teach, has not asked her father if she can get employment because she is aware that she would have to work in another village and her father would not permit this:

> I have not asked my father if I can get employment...I would have to go far away to teach. I would have to transfer out of Booni. [He does not want me to leave Booni]. (field interview)

Roshan, whose experience was described earlier, applied for a teaching position in a village about 30 kilometers from Booni because there were no jobs available in the

valley. Her husband and father-in-law were against her working far away from Booni. However, with the help of her father, she was able to convince her in-laws and her husband to allow her to go. She says,

> In the beginning, my husband and my father-in-law did not want me to get employment...my husband did not want me to [leave Booni]. He did not want to go with me nor did he like that I go without him or without any other man from our household....My father forced my husband and father-in-law to agree. He told them that I had worked hard for ten years in school so I should get employment. (field interview)

Thus some women who have initially not been allowed to leave the valley to teach have managed to overcome this obstacle.

What is interesting about Roshan's case is that even though she was prepared to take up the teaching position, she needed her father to intervene in the process of persuading her husband and her father-in-law to let her go. Her experience is unique as most families in this culture do not interfere in their daughters' lives after their daughters are married. Furthermore, very few families allow their daughters-in-law to leave the valley to work. The general perception in this culture is that daughters-in-law belong to their husbands and their husbands' family like property. For example, Sultana, whose experience I shared earlier, does not want her daughter to work far away from the valley. However, once her daughter is married, Sultana will neither care what her daughter does nor will she interfere in her daughter's life as she will now belong to her husband and his family. Thus, women's freedom to take up employment is controlled quite strongly by the men.

Women's freedom to take up employment as LHVs and in the women's organizations of the AKRSP and CADP is also restricted by men. As illustrated earlier in Roshan's experience, many young women want to work as LHVs, but are not allowed by the men because they have to leave the valley for training. Another objection which many families in the community have against women working as LHVs and WOs is that the women have to travel within the village and the district by jeep and by foot, and, therefore, cannot observe *purdah*. Some women who work as LHVs and WOs described to me how the men throw rocks at the jeeps in which the women travel to show their discontent at women who work in such professions.

Ashraf, who is thinking about entering the paid labour market, does not have much choice about where to work because her husband does not want her to work for organizations like the AKRSP and CADP. She explains that he is strict about *purdah*

and is concerned because "the women are working with the men, [travelling] in the jeeps with the men and showing themselves to other men" (field interview with Ashraf). Even though Ashraf would like to work with one of these organizations, she says that the only employment which would be accepted by her husband is teaching. She explains , "[i]f I were teaching in Booni, I could go to school and come back in *purdah*" (field interview with Ashraf). In addition to concerns about *purdah*, many families also feel that it is not safe for their daughters to work as LHVs because they have to work alone in the health centres and because they are placed in villages far away from Booni.

Women who work as LHVs and WOs have different perceptions of these professions based on their personal experiences. Shabnum finds her job as an LHV safe because she has a good place to live. If she were in the teaching profession, she says that she would always be uncertain about where she would get work and if she would ever have to transfer. Being an LHV gives her independence because she does not have to worry about packing her bags and living with others as she would if she were a teacher. She shares her views,

> I like my job because it is a safe job. I have a good place to stay. With teaching, it is not sure where one will get a job. So you have to stay with someone and you always have to pack a bag and go. (field interview with Shabnum)

Many young women who are currently in school or who have just finished school also have aspirations to join these professions. Some women want to be LHVs because they really want to be able to give injections. Other women think this is an honorable profession. This profession also represents independence for women who think that it is good to be able to travel in the jeeps. As Rabia says, "[LHV] is a good profession and it is an honorable service; also they have their own vehicles."

Other women want to become doctors or LHVs because there is a shortage of women in these professions in some places of Chitral. Yasmin wants to become a doctor or an LHV because there are not many people in these professions in her village which is about 50 km from Booni:

> In my village, there are not many LHVs. If I study hard, I can become a doctor [LHV] or a big doctor [medical doctor]....When someone gets sick in our village, they have to go far away to Chitral. When we become LHVs or doctors, we will go back to our villages and treat them.... (field interview)

A number of other young Ismaili women, like Yasmin, also have a desire to become LHVs because they want to work in institutions, like the Aga Khan Health Centres, which have been established through the efforts of their spiritual leader, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV.

Many aspiring young women encounter obstacles within their families, particularly the men and older women, as they try to pursue a career as a doctor or an LHV. A dialogue between Sultana, a widow, and her daughter, Aisha, reveals their differing views of these professions:

> S: I do not want my daughter to be a doctor because being a doctor, she would have to go everywhere and I do not like this.
>
> A: Doctor is a good profession.
>
> S: (makes a face to daughter): It is not a good profession.
> (field interview with Sultana and Aisha)

Another familial conflict related to cultural factors is apparent in some of the young and older women's views of the health profession. While many older women do not want their daughters to join the health profession because they have to travel a lot or have to be with the men, younger women entering into these professions believe that these professions are necessary for women to pursue because of cultural factors like *purdah*. In most villages of the district there are no doctors or nurses. Therefore women have to travel to the nearest village where such facilities are available. Strict beliefs about *purdah* make it impossible for many women to travel alone in the jeep taxis. Furthermore, the men often have no time to accompany them. Thus, many women end up going without medical treatment. In villages where a doctor is available, the doctor is usually male and women will not go to him for treatment because of *purdah*. Many young women, therefore, think there is a desparate need for local female doctors and nurses in Booni Valley as well as other villages. Sakeena, a 40 year old woman who is experiencing a lot of stomach pains, will not go to the doctor in Booni because she observes strict *purdah*. Her husband cannot afford to send her or accompany her to Chitral town where there are women doctors practising. Cases like Sakeena's encourage many young women, like Rabia, to want to enter the medical profession:

> I wanted to serve the community....The people here need the help....Some women went to male doctors if they felt pain. Some women did not go to male doctors because of *purdah*. It is important for women to be LHVs because of *purdah*. It is alright for a woman to treat another woman especially during delivery cases, for example. (field interview)

However, while most women I spoke with talked highly about a female doctor from their village who practices in Chitral town, many of them are not willing to allow their daughters to take up such professions. Nonetheless, some mother's like Rabia's mother appear open-minded about this. While Shora was discussing whether development has been good for the women she said to me, "[t]he teachers teach our daughters and the LHVs help other women by giving them medication and in delivery cases" (field interview).

In some families, mothers want their daughters to enter the health profession and do not mind if their daughters travel far away to work. Rabia's mother is an example. Rabia really wants to be an LHV and her mother also wants her to get the training. Theirs is an unusual joint-family where the decision making power is with her uncle who is younger than her father. Rabia is frustrated and discouraged because her uncle has not given her permission to get training.[114] He also does not want her to go away to Brep where there is a teaching position available. Rabia shares her aspirations and the cultural barriers preventing her desires from being fulfilled.

> I wanted to be an LHV....My mother wanted me to get LHV training...but my uncle refused me to go....I tried at the social welfare office [where he said I can work]...My uncle does not want me to work anywhere else. If I became a teacher, then I might have to go to other places. I will be transferred so this is difficult. My uncle won't let me [work as a teacher]. There is no chance for me to get a job in Booni to teach. Maybe there is a chance for me to get a job in Booni, but I have not tried to get a job. I do not go out so how can I try. I am not allowed to go out to apply for any position for work. I found out from somebody that a position was open for me to get training in Brep Public School, but my uncle refused. My mother wanted me to go, but my father gave full authority to my uncle to decide. (field interview with Rabia)

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[114]The tension between the Shia Ismailis and the Sunnis is apparent in Rabia's family. Her immediate family is Ismaili while her uncle is Sunni. Rabia's mother is very concerned because he is quite rigid about *purdah* and this is affecting her daughters' aspirations.

Rabia's uncle has told her that she can only work at the social welfare office because he thinks there would be no risk of her having to leave the valley. Although Rabia and her mother are unhappy, they will not challenge any decisions made by the uncle because it could lead to a familial conflict which would be detrimental to these women. Therefore, even though mothers, like Rabia's mother, and daughters, like Rabia, desire certain types of employment, their lives are still structured around men's decisions which do not necessarily permit the women to do as they wish.

The interesting and unique situation in Rabia's home where her uncle, who is younger than her father, has been given the decision-making power provides further insight on attitudes towards education and employment. When I asked Rabia why her father, who is the eldest man in the household, leaves the decision-making to his younger brother, she said she did not know. However, my speculation is that he has this authority because he has been to school and is currently self-employed as a businessman where as Rabia's father has had no schooling and works on the farm. Because the family depends on the uncle for income, Rabia's father has left his younger brother with the decision-making power. It is interesting to see that decision-making power continues to remain with the men and is passed on even to younger men in the families who are earning, but as previously shown, women who are earning are not given decision-making power.

Differences in perceptions of women's employment in different professions are apparent between the Sunni and Ismaili Muslims. While women's mobility is a general concern with regards to work in health centres and rural development organizations, it seems to be more of a concern amongst Sunni families. Implications from the women's perceptions give a number of reasons to suggest this. Overall, Ismailis tend to be less strict about *purdah*. Ismaili families are less worried than Sunni families because their daughters are presently working or would be working in institutions like the Aga Khan health centres and women's organizations in the AKRSP which are connected to their spiritual leader, the Aga Khan. The guidance of the Aga Khan to educate girls and give them opportunities to progress also has an influence on many Ismaili families. It is interesting to note that most of the 42 women working in the entire district as LHVs are Ismaili women.

Women's entry into various areas of the paid labour market is highly controlled by cultural values and decisions made by male household members. It appears that most women from the older generation and most men prefer female family members to work in positions which are within the valley and which do not involve any travel. Teaching is a desired profession because women do not have to work with other men

and do not have to travel in jeeps. Women of this generation, however, aspire to work in areas like medicine or women's organizations. They perceive a need for women to be involved in the medical field because women in their culture find it uncomfortable to be treated by male doctors. Women of this generation also desire such positions because they can travel. A shift in cultural perceptions of space is thus evident amongst young women today. However, many women, particularly Sunni women or women from a mixed Sunni/Ismaili household, who want to become LHVs or WOs are not allowed to because it would break tradition. These women are very disappointed as a result of these restrictions. Nonetheless, they do not voice their frustration to the men in the household because this would go against cultural principles.

CHAPTER VIII:

LEARNING FROM THE WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES

Women's Perceptions: Schooling and Change in Booni Valley

The two preceding chapters have presented an account of the way women in Booni Valley of various age, religious, educational and work backgrounds perceive schooling and work in their lives. What is evident from the women's perceptions is the shifting personal and group values and goals. The development of various institutions such as health care, rural development and education in Booni Valley have had a great impact on the local people and their cultural meaning systems which have been a part of their primarily agrarian society for many generations. "Mass" schooling for girls in the valley is contributing to shifts in gender structures, family relationships, types of work, socio-economic positions, traditions of marriage and cast as well as long-held cultural values. These shifting goals and values are also resulting in cultural contradictions and paradoxes.

One significant change in the valley has been a shift in the way local people relate to their socio-economic structure as the community undergoes a transition from a caste to a class system. In this class system, money and formal sector employment are associated with high status and with work done by the high caste people of the previous economic system. Manual labour is viewed negatively in the new class system because of the higher financial rewards for non-manual employment, and the fact that this form of labour is closely associated with work done by those belonging to the lowest caste, the *Chirmugh*. Consequently, the overall goal of people in the community is to earn money, have formal sector employment and become a part of the upper class. Movement within different classes is a possibility whereas within the caste system status came solely from the family into which an individual was born.

The women's perceptions indicate a sense of competition in the community due to the changed nature of the stratification system and people trying to make it to the "top." Schooling is perceived as the key to achieving individual goals of paid employment and a cash income. Those with schooling are accorded high status and those who are able to reach the goal of getting formal sector employment are given an even higher status.

Another striking change in Booni Valley has been the shifting cultural boundaries with respect to gender relations. Cultural space in Booni is divided into public and private areas: The "public" space, that outside the household, is seen as much different than the "private" space, that within the household. Previously, only men have participated in activities which took place in public spaces; rarely have women been permitted to leave the household and most of their work has been centreed

in this private realm. Furthermore, whether in public or private space, it has been unacceptable for unrelated men and women to interact with one another. These spatial boundaries follow Muslim ideologies which have been reinforced by men who are recognized as having authority and decision making power in this culture.

Initially, schooling was perceived as public space where only men could come to learn. Boys, who were the financial supports of their households, were sent to school with the hope that they would find high status employment. Not only was the idea of women attending schools rarely considered, but it was generally accepted that women should take care of children as well as household and agricultural work. However, like the men, it has also been important for women to receive *Quranic* education.

A break in tradition began when a few families, primarily Ismaili, started to send their daughters to boys' school. The shift in gender structures was initiated by fathers who made the decision to enrol their daughters based on guidance from the spiritual leader of Ismaili Muslims, Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III. In only one instance in this study did a young school girl, Karima, take the initative to break tradition herself.

Despite the fact that men made the decisions to enrol their daughters in school, these changes were viewed negatively by many in the community. Local people perceived these girls and their families as "shameless" for violating traditional values and the teachings of Islam. They thought the girls would break traditions, like *purdah*, and start writing love letters to the boys. These perceptions suggest that only women could not be trusted and they would disrupt existing traditions such as arranged marriages if they were around men who were not part of their household. The Ismaili community faced a lot of pressure because they were accused of not abiding by Islamic teachings.

The transition for the girls who were being sent to school was also quite difficult. They wanted to stay at home with their mothers, play with their friends who were not going to school or graze cattle. Experiences of school-going girls at this time illustrate that girls were not preoccupied about love and boys. In fact, once they had reached puberty, girls were even shy to be in the presence of "unknown" boys and men at school.

A number of factors have contributed to gradual and eventual acceptance of girls' schooling by people in this community: the establishment of girls' schools; the continued guidance of Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III and, later, his grandson, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV to their Ismaili followers to

provide daughters with formal education; people following the example of others in the community who started to send their daughters to school and girls with schooling who were finding employment in the formal sector.

The establishment of a girls' primary school, and later a girls' middle and high school, in the valley has resulted in a significant shift in the community's value systems and cultural networking. Nearly all school-age girls in Booni attend school which is now recognized as an area in which women may also participate. The idea of girls attending girls' school is perceived positively by members of the community because girls can observe *purdah*. Young women in the valley are also pleased to have a girls' primary and high school because they do not longer have to worry about gender relations at school; mothers are content because their daughters do not have to be in the presence of men belonging to other families. In villages around Booni, where girls' middle and high schools are still unavailable, parents continue to be concerned about their daughters going to school and studying with boys.

Even with the acceptance of women's schooling in the community, traditional gender structures continue to be protected in the girls' schools. With the exception of a few male support staff members[115], only women are permitted into the school compound. Furthermore, women's movements to and from the school are guided by gender norms. Although it is acceptable for girls to walk through the village to and from school, they can only move through certain areas of the valley. In addition to gender norms, their age also determines the space in which they can move. Once girls reach middle school they are not allowed to leave the school compound until the school day has ended; primary school girls are permitted to go outside the school gates at recess time.

As gender roles are both maintained and redefined, school and work retain their old meaning and are also given new meaning. There are differences across the generations, but some common themes of schooling and work are apparent amongst all the women. Women associate status with schooling and express much sorrow for those girls whose families still do not send them to school. The women perceive schooling as a path to the modern world of formal sector employment, money, personal and financial independence, mobility and communication. They view skills like reading and writing as important tools for independence.

The women place much value on Urdu and English, in particular English, which have come to be viewed as languages of opportunity, hope and freedom. This

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[115]They do not teach, but work as *peons*, gatekeepers or secretaries.

valuing of other languages over Khowar seems to have both a status and a functional dimension. Women aspire to learn these languages so that they may communicate with people who come to their village from outside Chitral. Furthermore, these languages are important for securing paid employment positions and for facilitating easier learning in institutions for higher studies in other parts of Pakistan. At the same time there is a devaluing of their local language Kowar, as status is becoming associated with the ability to communicate in Urdu and English.

While schooling has been perceived as an opportunity to access the modern world, it is also viewed as a means to enhance women's traditional roles of household work, childcare and farming. One of women's roles has traditionally been the primary care provider of children and schooling is perceived as strengthing women in that role. Women with schooling are seen as better able to care of their children and better able to understand and help their children with their schoolwork because of their own school experiences. Schooling is also perceived as important for women in another way which benefits their children: schooled women can get employment and provide for their children.

Older women value formal education and regret that they never had the opportunity to attend. A significant value shift is evident amongst them. They have come to devalue their own important work, role and contribution to the family and community, and perceive themselves to be "animal-like" and dirty. They would rather "sit in a chair" in an office and do "easy" work. Women also perceive schooling as important for finding employment and enabling them to help their husbands with household finances. Women in Booni do not perceive their household work as contributing income to the family because of the emphasis placed on cash income. Widows with young children also wish they had been to school so that they could have found formal sector employment to survive their hardships of having no cash income in the home.

Women with no schooling do not wish a fate similar to theirs for their daughters and look to schooling for their daughters as an avenue to a better life. This better life is perceived to be one in which their daughters have employment and are earning money. Women from the older generation speak confidently about their daughters not having any difficulties finding employment after they finish their schooling. These women compare their daughters' situation to that of the women who attended school and began working in the formal sector when these institutions first appeared in the valley.

Women with no schooling also have strong desires for their daughters to go to school to acquire communication skills. For example, these women think that, with

schooling, their daughters will not have to depend on men to read and write letters for them. Schooling will give their daughters confidence and the capability to communicate in other languages, especially Urdu, with non-local people who come to the valley. In contrast, they perceive themselves as dependent in these and other matters, and their self-esteem as well as their self-confidence is very low. They think they having nothing to share about their life experiences because they have never been to school and because they cannot speak Urdu and/or English.

One result of "mass" schooling and the development of formal sector work for women is the extension of their space from the household to the larger community and, in some instances, to the world outside the community. Even though these shifting gender structures are impacting significantly on the women's lives, the pace of change and the specific decisions related to women are generally controlled by the men. This is apparent in the initial decisions made to enrol girls in school and the women's participation in formal sector work later on. Nevertheless, an important gender shift which is evident is that women are now encouraging their daughters to go to school and even take them to the school in some instances, a role previously held by men.

Women who are currently in or have been to school perceive schooling as an opportunity to access the modern world. Like their unschooled mothers, they value schooling because it represents a chance for formal sector employment, earning money, status, independence, communication, mobility and for acquiring knowledge. The school culture itself trains young women for a life different from their mothers' lives which they expect to have one day, although it is also valued for transmitting and acquiring religious knowledge which is a part of the curriculum and a large and important part of their mothers' lives. Like their mothers, girls also perceive schooling as a way to enhance their traditional roles. A paradox is present here in that these girls perceive schooling both as a gateway to massive change in economic activity and social positions and as a way to enhance their traditional roles. A further paradox is apparent in that they perceive schooling as a way to foster their traditional roles which the women have come to devalue in light of women's roles in the modern sector world.

Women's Perceptions: The Experiences of Schooling and Work in Booni Valley

Women who are currently in school and those who have been to school have varied experiences in this institution. In some instances, their experiences are positive. They are pleased with the commitment of some teachers, particularly those who teach Urdu and religion. Students find religion to be an easy subject to learn because they

have learned it all their lives; they find Urdu easy because it is their national language and this is the language of instruction at school. The girls are also happy with the bonds, friendships and links they have established at the school.

In most cases, however, young women find themselves in a school culture which does not entirely meet with their expectations. They are frustrated and disappointed because of teacher absenteeism, overcrowded classrooms and teaching methods which involve rote learning and memorization. These women are also disappointed with their teachers' limited knowledge of certain topics and complain that, as a result of this, they are unable to finish their course material. They are also disheartened because they find themselves engaging in similar activities at school as they would if they were at home, like looking after their teachers' young children. They say that many of the skills which they acquire such as doing embroidery are ones which they have learned from their friends when their teachers are absent; their mothers, however, perceive this learning as valuable and something which is part of the school curriculum. Young women perceive school learning as primarily a matter of course content and feel disadvantaged because their course material is not relevant to daily life in the village.

Young women in Booni also think they do not have much choice in subject matter and, consequently, most of them end up studying humanities with a focus on Urdu and religion. They are limited in their ability to study subject areas like science because of a lack of girls' higher secondary schools in Booni and because of inadequate resources at the current high school. Most girls also realize that they will not be able to leave the valley for higher education. No girls attend the higher secondary boys' school in the valley. Therefore, if they are able to get higher education, it would be through distance education.

Although many girls feel unfulfilled by their schooling experiences, they still continue through the process in an attempt to enter the modern world. Criteria for meeting these goals are based on the successful completion of higher education through passing centrally-set school learning examinations. Very often the girls feel compelled to adopt values like cheating to provide them with the academic knowledge and skills they need to lead them to their goals. The girls are disappointed and ashamed, but feel trapped in a system where they believe that cheating and competing are the only ways to the "better life." This value shift contradicts not only the ethics of Islam, but longheld cultural values of cooperation and sharing in the community.

Even if they successfully complete their schooling, most girls are unable to fulfil their expectations of entering formal sector work after schooling as they encounter

many cultural, financial and educational barriers along their path to the modern world. Only a few girls are able to leave the valley for further training. Most of these girls belong to the Ismaili faith where women do not adhere as strictly to *purdah* as the Sunni women. Some girls are unable to continue higher studies after high school because of financial constraints, gender expectations, parental decisions and marriage. A few continue with their studies through "distance education," either because their parents cannot afford to send them away to school or because they adhere strongly to cultural restrictions of space. Most girls find distance education difficult because they do not receive adequate assistance. There are few options available in distance education and women generally focus on Urdu and religious studies. One result of these restricted options is that those women who are later employed in the school system have limited knowledge in other disciplines contributing to a cycle in which other students' learning is continually limited to their teachers' narrow range of knowledge. In addition, distance education does not give women, who are aspiring to become teachers, practical training in schools.

However, even when women receive qualifications like bachelors or masters degrees, they often remain excluded from formal sector employment. Many factors contribute to this exclusion. Because most women specialize in only one or two areas of study, this affects where they can be accomodated into the paid labour market. The labour market is saturated in these "women's areas" and is, therefore, unable to absorb most graduates. Women are also restricted by male family members from working outside the household or from leaving the valley to work elsewhere. Rarely, if ever, do the women challenge decisions made by the men because this could jeopardize their position in the family and the community.

Those women who are unable to enter the formal sector now feel trapped in the traditional life which they perceive to be boring, difficult and dirty. They think of themselves as without employment and heading toward a boring and tedious life which they consider "destroyed" for the rest of their future. Feeling cheated out of their schooling experience and looking on the whole process as a waste, most of these women undertake their household responsibilities with little enthusiasm. Furthermore, much of the school curriculum is irrelevant to the local culture and does not prepare women for the traditional lifestyle which most of them enter after completing their formal education. Whatever they do learn to equip themselves for traditional work like knitting and embroidery or hygiene and cleanliness are all part of the hidden curriculum. Thus the women's negative perceptions of their post-school reality contradicts their perceptions of schooling as a way to enhance their traditional roles.

Moreover, their mothers, who have partly seen schooling as a way to provide their daughters with a means to be better at household work and care giving, think that their daughters have not learned how to do this well.

The women's goal of being able to use their schooling to communicate with others -- with outsiders -- is also idealistic as visitors who come to the valley are usually only in contact with the schools, other development institutions or prominent people in the village. Furthermore, gender expectations and inadequate Urdu or English skills affect how much the young women actually speak in front of others.

The few women who reach the final destination of employment are the envy of women in the community. Women in formal sector employment feel privileged to be part of the "modern" world and perceive their positions in the paid labour market to be a result of school. Formal education has brought them status, work in a clean environment, and has enabled them to earn a cash income and experience a sense of independence. They are also able to meet and communicate with people who come to visit the valley. The women feel happy to be part of the community and to be able to help others.

However, once women are in the paid labour market, they still encounter barriers which prevent them from fulfilling their aspirations of having financial independence. Despite their salary income, only a few women actually have funds at their disposal which they can control. Women are restricted by men in their households in how to spend their money and how much of their earnings they can retain. The women are generally aware of their situation and they accept it.

The number of formal sector positions in which women can find employment are also very limited. At the community level, employment for women is concentrated around caregiving roles like teaching, healthcare and community organization activities. There are very few women in administrative positions because women are streamlined into non-administrative employment areas either by community values or their school curriculum. Teaching appears to be the occupation most accepted by men and older women in the community as *purdah* can be observed in this profession. The healthcare and community organization professions are less acceptable because they require more movement within the valley and larger district and require travel with men. The young women themselves are keen on the healthcare profession because they think it is useful to help women who culturally cannot be treated by a male doctor. Many of these women end up very disappointed because of decisions made by household men who do not permit girls to enter these professions.

But the trend of women and girls attending school is causing a great impact on women's work, whether in the formal or informal economy. The workload of adult women at home and on the farms is increasing with their daughters being in school. This increase in labour is amplified because many women are also taking on male household and agricultural tasks as more and more men find paid employment outside the household. Furthermore, the workload of women who themselves enter paid employment is also increasing. They have a double workload comprising of their family expectations at home and their job requirements.

Schooling and formal sector work are resulting in major shifts in the traditions and culture of people, especially the women, in Booni Valley. As the development process continues in the valley, it is important for women's voices to be heard and their experiences to be accounted for in the planning, implementation and evaluation of development projects.

Implications of the Study

The implications of the women's rich experiences expressed through their powerful words extend far beyond the contributions which many local people think women are capable of making. Earlier in the study, I affirmed my committment to the empowerment approach for women which recognizes the importance of women's voices to speak about their perceptions of themselves and others within society, their ideas of needed changes and their skills and knowledge. Contrary to the beliefs of the local men in Booni, who often wondered what value there was for me to speak with women and not men, and to the local women's perceptions of themselves as having nothing to contribute to this research, I have been deeply moved by the women's ability to speak about their realities which have allowed many implications to surface about the place of schooling and work in their lives. The process of listening to the women has also shown me that "...when women unaccustomed to speaking for themselves, do begin to speak, a new social and experiential reality becomes visible with recharged awareness and action" (Gayfer, 1980: 6). I feel this study has been empowering for the women, many of whom have never had the opportunity to speak about their realities.

From the women's experiences, it can be gathered that the current development process with regards to schooling and formal sector work is not fully meeting women's

practical and strategic gender needs.[116] Although various development strategies are in place in Booni Valley, most adopt a welfare or equity approach.[117] These strategies do little to address the broader development approach in which the current development processes are embedded, and focus primarily on women's productive roles in the community and larger society. Furthermore, they do not acknowledge women's important reproductive roles or the gender relations within the household (Rathegeber, 1990). Therefore, women's ability to achieve their potential is limited and this, consequently, limits the potential of communities and nations (Jacobson, 1993: 76).

Listening to the Women's Voices

Women's Organizations

I think that an important implication from the women's experiences and my observations of community life is that women should be given more opportunities to dialogue. This process would allow women to gain confidence in themselves and their abilities and to alter their self-perception. This is especially true in Booni Valley where the women live in a "culture of silence" (Freire, 1985), and are influenced by the myth of their own ignorance.

Women's organizations would be an ideal forum for discussions to take place. More women in Booni Valley could join the women's organizations already established by the Women in Development sections of the AKRSP and CADP.[118] If this forum is not suitable to some women, facilitators, ideally local women, could organize small groups in different hamlets and meet at times which are convenient to the local women given their heavy reproductive and productive responsibilities around the household. Facilitators for any women's organization should be skilled at posing problems to promote critical consciousness. Women participating in these organizations should be given the opportunity to participate in all parts of the program from the planning to the

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[116]See Chapter II, Part 1 "Women and Development: Theories and Approaches" for a detailed definition.

[117]See Chapter II, Part 1 "Women and Development: Theories and Approaches" for a detailed definition.

[118]The Women in Development sections of the Aga Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP) and the Chitral Area Development Project (CADP) have structures in place where women collectively voice their needs in a systematic and organized manner. The women's organizations (WOs) are designed to provide those women who have chosen to participate a means to improve their economic condition through social organization. AKRSP, for example, has developed packages for the WOs in areas where women traditionally play an active role like poultry farming and vegetable production. These packages are aimed at income generation and the enhancement of women's skills. The WOs have also enabled rural women to articulate other needs for education, health and clean drinking water (AKRSP, 1993: 2). These organizations are also geared towards bringing about gender awareness.

execution. This would develop their organizational skills and their confidence to work collectively. In this culturally sensitive atmosphere of women's organizations, a mutual learning would take place and, through constant integration of reflection and action, a full understanding of women's needs, roles and positions in society can develop (Gayfer, 1980; Savane, 1982). In the process, women's empowerment can begin to take place as they work and discuss collectively for problem solving and, eventually, for structural change so that both their practical and strategic gender needs are met. Perhaps, most importantly, a discussion milieu for women would enable them to recognize their over-valuing of schooling, their devaluing of the major contributions they make to their families and their revaluing of education as a means of acquiring knowledge relative to all areas of their lives: spiritual, economical and political.

Non-Formal Education Programs

Nonformal education programs could also be a way for the women to discuss collectively and, consequently, gain a sense of self-confidence and empowerment (Kindervatter, 1979; Stromquist, 1988). Like the women's organizations, these programs could be organized in a setting and time which is convenient to the women who face time constraints due to their daily workload. Nonformal education would mobilize women's groups in the village and ask for the women's complete participation in all parts of the program. Women would learn organizational skills and how to work collectively to bring about change. Facilitators for these programs should ideally be local women who are skilled at posing problems to promote critical consciousness.

The adult learning centre in Booni is a young organization which could incorporate the above strategies to bring about change. Similar centres could be established in other parts of the valley to ensure fuller participation of women. Government and non-government organizations can play a key role in ensuring the stability of such programs and can work together with women to bring about necessary changes. These programs could also work in conjunction with the women's organizations previously discussed.

School Culture: A Reformed Approach for Empowering Women

Even as women's organizations and non-formal education programs may assist women to recognize how a broader understanding of education can assist them in a "fully human" development process, so would a more reflective schooling process ensure such recognition in school education. Based on this kind of change, a change in the overall approach to schooling and other factors which make it difficult for women

and girls to participate in schooling would also deserve address. These include the curriculum content, the hidden curriculum and the preparation of teachers.

Reformed Curriculums

According to Goldsmith and Wright,

> [i]t is only by supporting and learning from women's actual experience of education and their attempts to create real alternatives that we can develop a model for the future which will be flexible enough to work in the enormously different cultural, political and social realities in which women find themselves in different parts of the world. (1987: 3)

The women's perceptions indicate that the curriculums currently being used at the girls' school in Booni Valley bear little relevance to traditional life which makes it difficult for them to apply their formal education skills to their daily agricultural lifestyle. A result of this irrelevance is that women perceive their schooling as a wasted experience; they merely "bank" (Freire, 1976) information which will hardly ever be used. Furthermore, they devalue their schooling experience because the formal sector work for which their schooling prepares them is not attainable, and this leaves many women in a situation where they never get to use their formal education.

The current system of education, which does not allow women to think critically or to have the opportunity to learn practical skills, also reinforces the "culture of silence" (Friere, 1985) in which women in Booni Valley live. This system continues to represent the dominant and prevailing value systems in the society into which women assimilate themselves unquestioningly. Therefore, a curriculum matched with the women's needs and designed to develop critical reflection could assist in making women's lives more productive and meaningful, and could also motivate parents to send daughters to school. A reformed school structure could also allow the women in Booni Valley to recognize the value of their local knowledge, culture and language.

"Revaluing" tradition

For schooling to be more relevant to local life, a link between the community, the home and the school should be established. The curriculum should be flexible and should draw upon and disseminate the wealth of traditional knowledge which the local people, particularly the women, have in efforts to preserve this knowledge. Women's current role in the nonformal economy as well as their potential roles in all sectors of the formal economy should also be recognized in the curriculum. This process would

also bring more local people, especially women, into decision-making and would enable them to recognize the value of their local knowledge and of women's contributions to their families and the community. It would also be valuable to have women participating at the administrative level to allow for women's gender needs to be taken into account in curriculum development.

To address the devaluing of the local language and culture, Kowar would need to be included in the curriculum and the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity would also need to be addressed (Eliou, 1976; Fasheh, 1990). With regards to religion, which constitues a fundamental part of the curriculum, more emphasis should be placed on understanding the ethical aspects of Islam and the important role which both Muslim men and women have in acquiring knowledge and helping mankind through cooperation and peaceful actions. A reformed education curriculum which encourages cooperation rather than competition in combination with carefully developed criterion-referenced exams and good teaching, would help to eliminate cheating during exams. A culturally relevant curriculum would thus ensure that the value of the local language and cultural knowledge are preserved and that the schooling process does not culturally alienate students.

By involving women in curriculum development, they could begin to think critically about the social, political and economic structures which currently limit women's potential. For students to also achieve a deepening awareness of the socio-cultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform reality, a process of "conscientization" (Freire, 1985) should be incorporated in the formal education system. This should be combined with a reformed examination system that tests more critical thinking skills which students can apply to the rural community (Oxenham, 1984).

Reformed curriculums for a productive workforce

The women's schooling and work experiences indicate that the rate of unemployment in the formal sector has not decreased and income has not increased with schooling (Carnoy, 1980; Simmons, 1980). A culturally appropriate curriculum would incorporate agricultural and vocational training for women so that they become part of a productive workforce within their communities (Bacchus, 1981). They could learn techniques which might reduce their workload without threatening local knowledge and skills. Women could also learn about environment protection since they play such a vital role in agricultural production. A curriculum reform would thus increase women's knowledge, improve their skills to become self-sufficient and create

a sense of awareness of their roles as workers and citizens in society. It would also influence the occupational choices of women away from white-collar jobs to which they currently aspire.

Environments conducive for learning

Culturally reformed curriculums should occur with a simultaneous effort to improve the physical facilities and resources of existing schools and to expand girls' schools at all levels in rural areas. This expansion would be sensitive to cultural practices, increase retention rates and reduce financial burdens for parents who currently send their daughters away to school. The establishment of higher secondary schools would also allow more girls to directly access higher education and to study collectively. With the proper guidance, girls could benefit more from their educational experiences at an institution. An increase in educational facilities would also increase employment for women. A strategy for educational reforms may necessitate a major restructuring and a shift in government priorities for educational, economic and social reform. This shift would recognize that economic development needs to be based on strong social development policies and requires a reallocation of expenditure for Pakistan's social development.

For girls who currently learn or who would continue to learn through home-based distance education, a culturally sensitive environment where a group of girls could come together and share their ideas would lead to students feeling less isolated. It would also give these women a chance to dialogue, work collectively and, thereby, become empowered. This learning process could be linked to the previously mentioned women's organizations in the community.

Coordinating education and development policies

Ideally, education and development policies should be coordinated. Reforming the school curriculums and increasing the number of schools are in themselves not holistic for addressing women's strategic gender needs. This would necessitate a process of peaceful transformation of development practices in the valley toward one which valorizes agricultural sectors (Carnoy, 1980). Combined efforts between AKRSP, CADP and the government and Aga Khan Schools, for example, could bring about more positive schooling and work experiences for the women. The women could learn about management techniques at school so that they could engage in income-generating activities with AKRSP and CADP. Reducing income differentials and according more prestige to traditional labour, would influence student motivation.

Political will is, therefore. important for necessary structural changes which complement the reformed school curriculums (Bacchus, 1988; Floresca-Cawagas and Toh, 1989).

Teacher Preparation

In order for any change to occur which would affect the teachers of Booni Valley, it is important that the teachers' perceptions are heard and that they contribute to this change by articulating and defining their own gender needs. However, from the girls' perceptions and my own observations, it is apparent that after schooling many teachers leave their role as students and enter directly into their demanding roles as facilitators without any meaningful preparation. Thus the current cycle of unmeaningful learning continues. For students to have more fulfilling and "consciousness-raising" (Freire, 1985) schooling experiences, their teachers should be skilled at posing problems to promote critical thinking and facilitating active learning and dialoguing in the classrooms.

Local teachers should be provided with quality preparation which would increase their abilities in critical evaluation and judgement formulation about their own teaching methods; allow them to create more suitable methods and better learning environments in classrooms, schools and communities; and give them experience teaching different subject areas and developing lesson plans (McNamara, 1989). This training would be useful if it were provided to potential teachers before they were hired. The current practical training for teachers, after they have been hired, could be changed to on-going professional development. A key way to ensure continued teacher motivation and to maintain teachers' skills is to hold regular workshops for them. These workshops would also give teachers the opportunity to dialogue, contribute personal insights about their realities and, hence, become empowered. To ensure cultural sensitivity, teacher training centres for women with residential facilities could be set-up in Chitral District and coordinated with the Field Base Teacher Development Programme already established in the region. These centres could also be linked with institutions such as the Institute for Educational Development, Aga Khan University, Pakistan, which are committed to empowering teachers to be critical thinkers and potential change agents in their communities. These centres would reduce women's travel to other areas of Pakistan and would increase their preparation to teach in the classroom which is impossible to do through distance education.

Where teachers would still be trained through distance education, this form of learning could be offered as part of a package. A group of three to four women could

meet to discuss their work and to build their reflective capacity. However, this form of reflective and critical learning would probably work only if the school environment and the NGOs were already encouraging it.

Given the culture in Booni Valley and the concerns raised by women about maintaing *purdah* in front of male administrative staff, it is also important for women to enter positions in administration, decision-making and policy-making. In this manner, women's voices and experiences will be added and complemented to the male perspective which currently shapes most social, economic and political structures in the community. A restructuring of teacher preparation programs would require committment and dedication from both government and non-government organizations.

Recognizing the Importance of Women's Contributions

The data discussed in the thesis has implications in areas of social life in Booni Valley which go far beyond the walls of the school. Among others, these implications are contained within issues related to the definition of work, the multiple or *triple* roles of women in the valley and gender and family structures in the community.

Redefinition of "Work"

This study reveals that women's contributions are crucial to the well-being of their families and the community. However, women's traditional work is devalued and seen as unimportant. A critical examination of the concepts and definitions of work needs to be made by conventional development policies in order to collect information to create a real picture of subsistence economies. Jacobson (1993) suggests that a redefinition of the concepts of "productivity", "value" and "work" should take place to include all activities of production. From this information, appropriate and useful disaggregated gender data could be generated. This would not only make it possible to address the women's apparent devaluing, and indeed denigration, of the vital work which women do in their households, but it would also make it possible to collect information to create a real picture of subsistence economies.

Recognizing Women's "Triple Role"

The experiences of young women in Booni Valley who attend or have attended school show that their workload at home strongly affects their performance at school. The girls are often unable to complete their school work because of their demanding household and agricultural responsibilities. Furthermore, their mothers do not understand the type of work expected by the school and their fathers do not understand

the demands of women's household and agricultural work; some girls even miss school during harvest time. Education programs should, therefore, be assessed, re-designed and carried out at times which would be convenient for the women without affecting their schedules at home. Revised curriculums would also make what women learn at school relevant to their work at home.

There should also be an increased awareness at the household level of the demands of schooling. Male household members, like fathers, father-in-laws, husbands, uncles and brothers could be made aware of the demands of women's household and agricultural work. Mothers who have never been to school should be made aware of the school culture and what is expected of their daughters at school. This could be done through nonformal education programs where women, mothers, teachers and students are collectively organized to meet and discuss the school culture.

The distribution of labour at the household level needs careful reflection to ensure that neither father-in-law nor mother-in-law, father nor mother, son-in-law nor daughter-in-law and son nor daughter are disadvantaged. This distribution of work needs to be reflective of the appropriate distribution of resources and the appropriate contributions to decision-making by all family members; this would especially increase women's and girls' ability to contribute to decisions. Family support and community support structures are needed to ensure that childcare is shared among family members and more widely in the community if adult family members are all employed in the formal economy. Finally, this redistribution of labour would have repercussions in the organization of work, work in the labour market and work/study in school.

Practical Gender Needs to Meet Strategic Gender Needs

The gender structures in Booni Valley are deeply embedded and will require a slow process of change. Change is already apparent as women are participating more in the move to a formal economy than they did some years ago. However, in order for their participation to be more holistic it needs to be accompanied by a more empowering approach to development whereby structural shifts bring about necessary social, economic, political and legal transformations.

Although various strategies for meeting the women's gender needs have been outlined above, these will take time to implement and to take effect. In order for women's strategic needs to be met and in order for gender equality, social, political and economic change to take place and to ensure that women's and men's rights are protected in the legal system, women's practical gender needs will need to be met first (Alsop, 1993). Through meeting their practical gender needs the women can engage in

a process of dialogue and critical reflection and recognize the structures which prevent them from participating equally with men in the development process.

However, as Moser (1989) emphasizes, the empowerment approach does not mean that women should dominate men. The process of empowerment should build up women's internal strength, self-reliance and self-confidence and create a path along which both genders can learn to share power and mutually support each other. This perception of empowerment is crucial to communities like Booni Valley where there is often concern and scorn about women participating in activities outside their homes. It is important to educate fathers, brothers, husbands, uncles and father in-laws about the nature and objectives of empowerment and for them to support the women and work together with them.

Recommendations for Further Research

The limited research on women in the Chitral District holds much scope for studies on women in many aspects of their lives. Many recommendations can be provided, but I have suggested only those which I have perceived to be the most crucial. In order to have a more holistic understanding of the role of schooling and work in the lives of people in Booni Valley, a study which explores the meaning of schooling and work for men in the valley should be undertaken. It is also important to understand men's perceptions of gender structures in the valley.

A more in-depth study focusing on all aspects of women's work in the valley and the role which government and non-government institutions play to enhance women's work experiences is also important.

To get a more holistic picture of schooling in the Chitral District, it would be useful to understand the way schooling is perceived in other parts of the Chitral District, where the rate of economic growth is not taking place as fast as it is in Booni Valley.

This study has also revealed the importance of a study to understand female teachers' perceptions of schooling, their role as teachers and the realities they face while participating in this learning process.

An in-depth study which looks at the various forms of literacy practices amongst men and women in the valley would also be valuable to understand the different types of learning in this culture.

It would be valuable for a follow-up study to this thesis to be conducted about 10 years from now. This study should look at the way the current generation of

women will be coping with schooling and work. It should examine the way in which these women's schooling will be impacting upon the lives of their children and their families to see if it will be different or similar to the relationship which their mothers with no schooling had with their families. Furthermore, it should examine the gender and family structures for any further shifts.

A study on the role of existing women's organizations (WOs) in the community would also be important to see if they are empowering women.

Personal Reflections on the Experience

According to Lather, "dialectical practices require an interactive approach to research that invites reciprocal reflexivity and critique, both of which guard the central dangers to praxis-oriented empirical work: imposition and reification on the part of the researcher (1991: 59). When I approached this study, I made a conscious decision to listen to the women's experiences of schooling and work in Booni Valley. As an ethnographer, my role was to be the "essential instrument" (Wolcott, 1975: 115) which had to mediate all other roles acquired by and ascribed to me during the course of interaction with the women.

However, it is with humility that I present the women in this study and offer any suggestions; the power to bring about any form of transformation in Booni Valley lies primarily with the local women and men. Many women in the valley perceive women from the Western world, like myself, to be "solution-bearers" and very often they would ask me what I was going to do for them. My response at that time was that they, the women, had the solutions and it was their words/voices which would bring about any transformation in their lives. I believe more strongly in this response after my experience listening to the women and sharing in their lives for three months in the field followed by ten months of compiling their perceptions. I have merely been the "instrument" who has brought to light the women's rich and insightful experiences by listening to and recording their voices. The women's words clearly reveal the women as knowledgeable, insightful and resourceful people who have the ability to dialogue, work in cooperation and, consequently, be empowered to address their gender needs if provided with an avenue such as women's organizations.

I also recognize that it is not up to me as a Western feminist to accept or reject the women's condition in the valley; it is up to the women of Booni Valley to challenge and/or reform, depending on their own various perspectives, on their own terms and in their own culturally specific ways (Amos and Parmar, 1984). Through mutual respect

and in their own culturally specific way, the women of Booni Valley can hopefully work collectively with the men one day to bring about necessary changes.

I would also like to note that, while I am proud to be a Shia Ismaili Muslim, I have come to this study realizing the importance and the value of respecting other cultures, faiths and traditions. I have recognized that the experiences and realities of both Sunni and Shia Ismaili women of Booni Valley are equally valuable, and that both of these groups of women are equally resourceful and insightful to address their gender needs and interests. It is my hope that the women and men of these two faiths work collectively and peacefully in the true ethic of our faith, Islam, to ensure a life of mutual respect and cooperation.

I hope to return one day to Booni Valley and to meet and dialogue with the women who so selflessly shared their lives and their homes with me.

The Journey Does Not End Here

As the encounters between the traditional and modern cultures continue in Booni Valley, the need for women's empowerment becomes even more critical to contribute to transformational practices that can bring about gender equality and that can bring about awareness to take what is valuable from both cultures for a peaceful and meaningful life. The journey to enable women to become self-confident and self-reliant and to understand the critical role they play in the development process has just begun. This journey will not end until networking amongst the women in Booni Valley increases and extends to communities in the larger district, the nation and the world so that women can achieve full development of their capacities and can contribute to their societies in all domains.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions: Women with no schooling

Thank-you very much for agreeing to share your experiences with me. Everything you share in this session will be kept in confidence and your real names will not appear in any formal documents that I write. I am currently doing a Master's Degree in Education focusing on women's schooling at the University of Alberta in Canada (I am 'writing a book' on women's schooling experiences). I am particularly interested in the way that education has influenced women's lives in the Third World (in Booni Valley, Chitral). I am interested iin the way schooling has been an influence in your life. With this in mind would you please...

1. Describe a typical day that you have in a week.
(***Probe***: division of labor in the house; always been your routine?)

2. How much schooling have you had?

If has not completed school or has not been to school

2b. Could you describe some of the reasons why you did not complete school or you did not go to school?
(***Probe***: parents/communities attitudes towards women's schooling; attitudes today; religion and women's schooling; women's schooling and development)

3. What kind of things were you doing when you left school/when you might have been in school?
(***Probe***: What did you do when you were young/when you left school; why did you leave school; when did you get married?)

4. How might your life have been different if you had gone to school?/completed school?
(***Probe***: In relation to brother's/son's/husband's/daughter's/women with schooling's lives; personal hygiene; childcare; environment; personal rights; independence; freedom to make decisions; employment)

5. What were schools like when you were growing up?
(***Probe***: your village in relation to other villages; girls' schooling; school facilities, teachers, curriculum; further educational opportunities for women; in relation to boys' schooling; compared to today)

6. What kind of educational opportunities did your husband have?
(***Probe***: boys' schools; attitudes towards boys' schooling)

7a. Do you feel that your husband's schooling has had an impact on the way he lives his life?
(***Probe***: compared to a man who has not been to school; compared to his sons)

7b. Has his schooling had an impact on your life?

8. Do your children go to school? Describe their schooling to me?
(***Probe***: Level of schooling they have attained; discussions at home about their schooling; how do they perform; their feelings about schooling; your expectations of them; their desires for further education)

9. Why do you send your children to school?

(*Probe*: in relation to personal development/development of area/religion/your life/father's life/brother's life/son's life/employment)

10a. How much schooling would you like your child to receive?
10b. At what age would you like your daughter to get married? Will she have a choice in whom she marries and if not what qualities will you look for in her future husband?
(*Probe*: age; education; religion; caste; personality)
10c. How do you see her future compared to yours?
10d. What kind of work would you like her to do after completing school?

11. Given a choice, would you send your son or your daughter to school and why?

12. Would you consider giving your daughter's hand in marriage before she completed her metriculation? and your son? Why/Why not?

13. What qualities would you look for in a future husband for your daughter?
(*Probe*: personality, age, religion, education, caste)

14. What values do you feel school imparts which are useful for your daughter?

15. What values do you teach your daughter which she may not get at school?

16. What values does your daughter learn from religion which are useful for her?

17. Is schooling teaching values which are different from what you and your families have traditionally given your children? If so, how do you view these values?

18. In what way has the development in Chitral benefitted women?

19a. What decisions do you make in the home and what decisions does your husband make? What about other members of the household?
19b. Do you think schooling will affect the type of decisions your daughter will be able to make in her husband's home? How do you feel about this?

This is the end of the interview. Thank-you for sharing your experiences and your time with me.

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions: Women with schooling

Thank-you very much for agreeing to share your experiences with me. Everything you share in this session will be kept in confidence and your real names will not appear in any formal documents that I write. I am currently doing a Master's Degree in Education focusing on women's schooling at the University of Alberta in Canada (I am "writing a book" on women's schooling experiences). I am particularly interested in the way that education has influenced women's lives in the Third World (in Booni Valley, Chitral). I am interested iin the way schooling has been an influence in your life. With this in mind would you please...

1. Describe a typical day that you have in a week (school day/holiday).
(***Probe***: has this been your routine since you were a child; division of labor in the house - children, women, men)

2a. Has your mother gone to or completed school? Why/Why not?
b. Has your father gone to or completed school? Why/Why not?
c. What made it possible for you to complete school?
(***Probe***: parents/communities attitudes towards women's schooling; do you feel attitudes towards women's schooling are different today compared to when your parents were young?; value of women's schooling in Islam/Ismailism; value of women's schooling in relation to Chitral's development).

3. Describe some of your experiences at school.
(***Probe***: class 1-5; class 6-8; class 9-10; educational opportunities afte metric; friends; teachers; subjects liked best and worst and why; extracurricular activities; facilities; who helped you with homework; expenses; own plans after completing school/what family would like you to do; do/did you have friends who did not go to school and if so why?; friends in school who are married)

4. In what way do you think the schooling you are receiving will affect your life?/you have received has affected your life?
(***Probe***: in relation to your mother's/father's/brother's/sister's/husband's / child's/ a woman with no schooling's life; in relation to employment, personal hygiene, child's health, independence, personal rights, environment, freedom to make decisions, Islam/Ismailism; the way you interact and talk with others)

5. How will you feel about your schooling if you are unable to find employment?

6. If you had to choose between sending your son or your daughter to school, who would you send? Why?

7. What do you feel that schooling teaches/taught you which is useful to you?

8. What values do you teach your children/learn from your parents which one may not get at school?

9. What values do you learn from your religion which are useful to you?
9b. Is schooling making people less or more religious?

(If married)
10. When did you get married?

10b. Did you have a choice about whom you married?

11a. What kind of educational opportunities did your husband receive?
11b. Has the schooling he received affected the way he lives his life?

(If not married)
12a. Will you be able to choose future husband?
12b. What kind of qualities would you like him to have?
(***Probe***: age; education; caste; religion; personality)

13. Do your children go to school? Describe the schooling they are receiving compared to yours?

14a. How much schooling would you like your daughter to receive?
14b. At what age would you like your daughter to get married? Will she have a choice in whom she marries and if not what qualities will you look for in her future husband?
(***Probe***: age; education; religion; caste; personality)
14c. How do you see her future compared to yours?
14d. What kind of work would you like her to do after completing school?

(If married)
15a. What decisions do you make in the home and what decisions does your husband make? What about other members of the household?
15b. Do you think schooling will affect the type of decisions your daughter will be able to make when she gets married? How do you feel about this?

(If not married)
16a. What decisions does your mother make/your father/you/other members of the household?
16b. Do you think schooling will affect the type of decisions you will be able to make when you get married? How do you feel about this?

17. Is schooling changing the values in your society? In what way?

18. In what way has the development in Chitral benefitted you/other women?

This is the end of the interview. Thank-you for sharing your experiences and your time with me.

APPENDIX C

Glossary

AKES, P	Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan
AKRSP	Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
Allah	God
Almari	Cupboard
Al - waez	An Arabic term referring to one who invites others or who summons others to the faith, in this case Islam; this word is used more commonly amongst Shia Ismaili Muslims
Azaan	Call for prayers.
Bazaar	Main street and economic centre of a village
Bhai	Means brother and is used as a form of respect
Boli	Work for which the *Chirmugh* (in the previous caste system) were not paid was referred to by this term
Bourkha	Long traditional dress which includes a veil; worn by some Muslim women
Bret	Local bread first cooked over fire and then baked inside fire
CADP	Chitral Area Development Project
Chakouram	Four chakourams equal about one acre
Chirmugh	Those who performed manual labor on the nobles land within the previous caste system, which was abolished in the 1970s by the government of Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. This group was considered to be the lowest in the caste hierarchy.
Copies	Scribbler in which to write
Distance education	Learning through correspondence
Down district	Regions in Pakistan outside the Chitral District
Du'a	Prayers
Dupatta	A piece of cloth, like a scarf, which women use to wrap around their upper bodies and with which they cover their heads
F.A./F.Sc.	Local terms which refer to the qualifications received after completing higher secondary school (class 12); "F.A". refers to humanities and "F.Sc." refers to science

Ghee	Shortening
Godown	Warehouse where wheat is sold in bulk.
Gulistan book	Persian primer
Hadith	Sayings of holy Prophet Muhammed
Hafeez	A person who has memorized the *Holy Quran*
Haram	That which is forbidden
Holy Quran	Holy book of Muslims which is a collection of revelations to Prophet Muhammed from *Allah*
Imam	Religious leader/guide
Islamiyat Ikhtiari	Islamic studies; students learn about the importance of the Quran and the importance of the holy Prophet's sayings, *hadiths*
Islamiyat Lazmi	Islamic studies; students memorize the Quran and learn its meaning; students learn about the holy Prophet's sayings, *hadiths* and acquire knowledge abou the ethics of Islam
Izat	Respectability
Jamatkhana	Prayer hall for Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims
Kalir.	Local carpets made out of sheep wool remnants which are dyed by the women
Kazi	Legal scholar who is well-versed in Islamic law; for example, performs marriage and funeral ceremonies
Kho	Dominant ethnic group in the Chitral District. In relation to the rest of the North West Frontier Province which is dominated by the Patans, however, the *Kho* are a minority ethnic group.
Khowar	Local language of the Chitral District
Kiyamat	The day of judgement.
Lals	The noble families who ruled over the state in the previous caste system which was abolished in the 1970s by the government of Prime Mininster Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.
LHV	Lady Health Visitor
Madrasa	During the pre-colonial period, these were middle/high schools where the Holy Quran, hadiths (sayings of Prophet Muham philosophy, Shariah (Islamic law), Arabic and Persian literature and medicine were taught; these schools are now only relevant to religious education.

Maktab	During the pre-colonial period, these were primary schools attached to the mosques where Quran, Persian, Arabic and elementary math were taught; these schools are now only relevant to religious education.
Masjid	Prayer hall; Sunni Muslims in Booni Valley attend the *Masjid.*
Matric.	Abbreviation of matriculation; in the local context, matriculation refers to the completion of schooling at the class 10 level
Mazdur	One who does manual labour
Mehtar	The ruler in the former state of Chitral.
Mubadiat	Home economics
Mullah	A religious scholar/teacher
Namaaz	Prayers
Patan	The dominant ethnic group of the North West Frontier Province
Privately	Local term which refers to "distance education"
Purdah	An institutionalized system of veiling and secluding of women practiced in some Muslim traditions
Qirat	Religious poetry
Rizaq/Rozi	Destiny; that which *Allah* wills in a person's lifetime
Rupee	Pakistani currency; 25 Rs. = $1 Cdn (1994)
Shariah	Islamic law
Tehsil	Refers to either: the two administrative sub-divisions of the Chitral District, Lower Chitral (Chitral) and Upper Chitral (Mastuj); or the six sub-districts of the Chitral District, Torkoh, Molkoh and Mastuj in Upper Chitral and Drosh, Chitral and Lotkoh in Lower Chitral
Ushur	A grain tax which the Chirmugh were required to pay to the ruling class who falsely claimed that this tax was an Islamic obligation of paying religious dues
WOs	Women's Organizations (falls under the Women in Development sections of the Chitral Area Development Project and the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme)

APPENDIX D

Consent Form

I give my consent to Ms. Almina Pardhan to use any of the information which I have shared with her during the unstructured interviews for her Masters Thesis Project (to explore women's perceptions of schooling and work) or for any formal documents which she writes. I understand that all the information which I share during the unstructured interviews with Ms. A. Pardhan will be kept confidential and anonymity of myself and any other persons mentioned during the interviews will be assured in all formal documents.

_____
Signature of Participant

_____
Researcher's Signature

(This consent form was translated to the local women in Khowar and, in some instances, in Urdu. Each participant was given a copy of the consent form. The participants were also informed that they could specify any information they shared during the interviews which they did not want published as part of the study.)