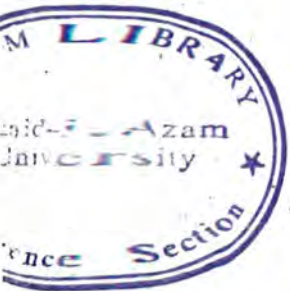


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**NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF THE FEMALE
WITH REFERENCE TO THE PREVAILING
GENDER BELIEFS.**

(A CASE STUDY OF A PUNJABI VILLAGE)



BY

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KEEP AWAY FROM PEOPLE WHO TRY TO BE LITTLE
YOUR AMBITIONS,.SMALL PEOPLE ALWAYS DO
THAT, BUT THE REALLY GREAT MAKE YOU FEEL
THAT YOU, TOO, CAN BECOME GREAT.

MARK TWAIN.

DEDICATED TO MY LOVING
MOTHER WHO ENABLED
ME TO FACE THE WORLD.

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
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FINAL APPROVAL OF THESIS

This is to certify that we have read the thesis submitted by MS. NOREEN SEHER and it is our judgement that this thesis is of sufficient standard to warrant its acceptance by the Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad for the award of degree of Science in Anthropology.

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RESEARCH RATIONALE

1.1 Introduction

It is the biological need of all living beings to eat something for their survival. This something must have nutritional value and should be available. (There is an old saying that all animals feed but humans alone eat; as they only consume selected food substances.) Humans are generally viewed as omnivorous, by definition an "omnivore" is an animal that takes food more than one trophic level. But in spite of the fact that human societies always face the fear of hunger and shortage of food, because they consume only selected food items and the selection of food substances as "edible" is governed by cultural perception of the people. So culture is a major determinant of what we eat and the nature of the food intake is shaped by social, economical, political and religious processes.

Human food ways include food choices, methods of eating and the size of the portion eaten, are integrated part of a coherent cultural pattern in which custom and practice has a part to play. Food habits are acquired early in life and once established are likely lasting and resistant to change. It comes in to being and is maintained because they are effective, practical and meaningful behaviours in a particular culture. They are product of every day environmental forces acting within the context of historical conditioning - a melding of new ideas and imperatives with old traditions. As nutritional status and health conditions of the individuals are

determined by the food habits, that's a reason initiation of sound nutritional habits in childhood are very important.

In most societies the human quest for food takes up a significant amount of their activities. At an individual level adequate food gives energy, satisfaction, health and the lack of it gives distress and illness. This relation of food with health attracted many social scientists to study the phenomenon. Anthropologists are one of them and the greater bulk of such studies led to the emergence of a separate branch ("Nutritional Anthropology"). This branch of anthropology deals entirely with the elements of food, health and related aspects.)

The emergence of nutritional anthropology and its studies led to the discovery of the relation of food habits and health to various cultures as both the concepts of food and health are recognized universally although their classification varies from culture to culture. The scientific classifications and explanations seldom confirm with the traditional perspective leading to technical problems. For instance (the Aryans used an intoxicating drink "Summa" on their sacred rituals in spite of knowing the fact that it is dangerous to their health) Various western oriented studies attempted to explain this phenomenon but failed to reach conclusive results as to why this practice is adhered to. The traditional perspective of the Aryans was based on the fact that this drink had become a part of their sacred rituals over the years and could not be avoided under any condition. Therefore in this research I have used the traditional local perspective about gender images and food items and then correlated it with dietary choices of individuals. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the dietary habits of the villagers, and especially of females who avoid

different nutrient food items during different stages of life. Dietary customs, preferences invoke the concept of culture as a device used to transcend the wants and needs of people. This is why human diets are used to explain the quality of life real people and it is important that their diets be viewed with in the realms of historical setting, environmental conditions, social relation as well as economic and religious forces.

Food is then seen not just as a tool for survival but plays many other roles. (Proverbs like “you are what you eat” and “tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are”) show the societal concern with the dietary aspect of their cultures. All (cultures have specific gender images about their male and female inhabitants) and their food habits also vary according to their sex. In almost all cultures usually children are socialised according to the biological sex that they have, so, ultimately they come up with different dietary behaviours. This situation leads to comment that there is an inter relationship between food choices and sex. Because traditionally hunger is seen as a basic drive for the survival of the individual, whilst sex is a basic drive for survival of these species. It might be expected that there could be found some parallels and interactions between these fundamental activities. There are indeed some similarities in food and sexual taboos.

(The phenomenon of the gender which is a cultural construction of biological factor sex, is very important in individuals life as it governs their whole life pattern), even it determines dietary choices of individuals. This phenomenon of gender always attracts my attention because in 3rd world countries, it's the most important factor, as here cultural traits are inter woven on gender basis. Even it effects the nutritional status of the individuals, because here fertility rate is high, incomes are low and female share of paid labour force is very small.

I selected to research on food habit with reference to gender beliefs because the village life could be understood through the food consumption pattern. As an anthropologist who knows what the members of a society eat, already knows a lot about them. Learning how the food is obtained, who prepares food and who gets privilege in its distribution, it adds considerably to the anthropologist's store of information about the way that society functions. And once the anthropologist finds out where, when, and with whom the food is eaten, just about every thing else can be inferred about the relations among society's members. This is possible because human behaviour has evolved in great part as an inter play between eating behaviour and cultural institution and it in turn influences anatomy, physiology and the evolution of the human organism itself. As females comparative to their counterpart males are less privileged members, so they have totally different dietary habits as compare to male, ideal physical images and specific prevailing beliefs about dietary items lead them(female) to select or reject dietary items during the different stages of their life which resulted into their poor nutritional status that is the thesis to be set forth by this academic research.

In the study, cause and effect relationship between the gender believes and dietary pattern of pubescent and prepubescent females are focused upon with in the bonds of the interplay of cultural bounds.

1.2 The Problem

Anthropologists evaluate nutrition in terms of why people eat the way they do and their findings contribute to the techniques of sociologists and health professionals who work for the improvement of the nutritional attitudes and opportunities of the society. Generally every

society's almost half population consists of females and the health of new generation dependent on their (females) health condition, which in turns effected from their dietary habits. For the healthier future generation it's very important to investigate the nutritional status of female, so that it would be possible to improve it through social and cultural changes. I've chosen the district of Multan to research on the nutritional conditions of the female. This research will be allowed to gain true knowledge about the reasons behind the female's malnutrition on two levels, on micro level it would give information about dietary habits of the region and on broader level study's inference will able us to improve the nutritional status of the country's female. The research problem of the study is as, why do family male members get privilege in food distribution and how cultural images of female physique, body nature, growth rate and social roles effect the diet of pubescent and pre pubescent females. And in order to conduct research, a small village in the region of Multan was selected, where different pattern of food consumption prevailed according to the age and sex of the individual.

1.3 The Hypothesis Of The Research

The hypothesis of field research is:

“gender beliefs determine differences in dietary choices of prepubescent and pubescent females”.

In this hypothesis gender believes is independent variable while dietary choices (of pre-pubescent and pubescent females) is dependent variable, because it is directly effected by the gender believes.

1.5.1 Hot/Cold Dichotomy

The syndrome of hot/cold classification of food is very common in the village. Usually all the food items consumed in the community are considered to have qualities attributed as hot and cold. Dietary choices are made on the basis of natives belief about the hot/cold effects of food items, so it is an indicator of this study. As it is an easily observable phenomenon which effect the diet of individual. That is a reason it is taken as an indicator of my study which is about nutritional choices of the pre-pubescent and pubescent females.

1.5.2 Concept Of Beauty

The word beauty refers to combination of qualities of a person or a thing that delights the sight or the other senses or the mind. Different people define beauty in different ways. But I was concerned about physical beauty. And according to my perception, beauty is in fact a physical balance in different parts of physique. It is also an indicator of the study because individual's diet is also effected by the concept of beauty as many nutrient items aren't used to keep themselves according ideal fit male and female.

1.5.3 Male Child Preference

Our society is male privileged society. The males are considered more valuable than female, as they are considered light of lineage, social and old age security for the parents. So ultimately they get privilege in distribution of food as they are more desired member of the family. In



Researcher with the host family

1.8.6 Photography

It is a general impression that visual expression is stronger than hearing. I used this technique to make my reader more comfortable and well aware by giving images of the village life. Because some things were found unique in the area which could be only understood with visual expression. So it was applied in the field to give images of location, dress code, important places etc. of the village.

1.9 Selection Of Locale

For my research, I had chosen a village called '*SANTY PHATAK*,' *Mauza MachianWala*, *Tehsil Burewala*, District *Vehari*, in the southern Punjab Province of Pakistan. It is an old village with people led by Arain. The language of the village is punjabi.

I have chosen this village in district of Multan because gender segregation is explicit in this region. The concepts of "Ghairat" and "Izzat" are also very strong. And female are considered economic burden and less privileged member of the family. I have to research the dietary habits of the prepubescent and pubescent females, and the factors which influenced it, as it was found that in this village females are discriminated in the sphere of food through different sort of norms and hot/cold classification of the food items. So it was proper locale for the study because I had found different age group of females from where I collected information relevant to my topic. An other reason to select this locale was that the culture and the language of the region was not new for me, so I hadn't face any major difficulty in the acquisition of the data.

This locale was suitable for me despite the prevalence of the gender segregation, because I had to talk mostly to females. As time passed and I gained confidence of these people I could even talk to the men.

Establishing rapport was easy as I stayed with my Mamoon's family, who had been living here since 1947. My grand father was a very religious person, my Mamoon is a homeopathic doctor who are greatly respected and has ties with almost every body in the village. My cousins have run a handicraft school in the village and I worked in it as an instructor, as a result I myself developed a friendly relationship with village females due to which they didn't hesitate to provide relevant information. This also helped me to establish in the village.

1.10 Survey Of The Relevant Literature

Food is defined as any thing which nourishes. All the living organism need energy for their biological survival which is gained from the natural surrounding environment. But man is different from other living beings he/she eats selected food items available in the natural environment.

Animal in contrast to man, just eat food and food is any thing available in the nature which their instincts place in the category of "edible"(leach,1970). As man is a social animal, lives in groups, and forms societies. These societies have their own culture which determines the life of the individual. And as food is important and essential aspect of man's biological survival. So from getting the food contents from natural environment to its pattern of consumption, it is directly influenced by the prevailing cultural traits. The people only eat those food items which

are sanctioned by the culture, and don't eat many nutrient things due to cultural taboos. In other words, Food habits are the ways in which individuals or groups of persons, in response to social and cultural pressures, choose, consume and make use of available foods(Guthe and mead,1945).

According to Fieldhous human food ways include choices, available method of eating, preparation etc., as an integral part of the coherent cultural pattern. He has mentioned that "Human diets are governed first by what man gets from the environment and given a choice, he eats what his ancestors ate before him" (1986).

From the variety of food contents available for human consumption, the selection is made of only a limited number of items. Indeed there are different factors which effect the consumption of food. G. Foster has mentioned these factors, according to him," religious taboos, superstitions, health belief, historical accident and personal choices exclude items from diet by classification as edible or not". Foster has further stated that choices of edible goods are sometimes based on logical rational and sometimes other wise, to substantiate his points, he has presented the example of African societies where millet is taken as bird seed and hence non-edible for human beings(1978).

Helman in his work has presented the role of food played in the society other than provision of nutrition. According to him, food plays a number of roles a part from providing nutrition to the body. Food beliefs are embedded in the social, religious and economic well being of the people(1984).

Once a society has its pattern of food, it is tried to pass it to the next generation. Harris also worked on food consumption pattern of people and highlighted the specific behaviour of the people which was articulated due to preferences and negligence, they enjoyed by being the member of society. He was of the opinion, "food preferences articulate behaviour and belief of the group in question and hence people value and preserve their traditional diets and try to pass them on to next generations" (1987). And the people enjoyed these preferences or negligence due to the sex they have. Because social roles are formulated on the basis of sex, which has given birth to the notion of gender Many anthropologists have researched on the notion of gender and its relationship with dietary intake. It has been found that the diet of a person is effected by gender phenomenon.

Harris has worked on the various factors which effected the dietary choices of individuals. The diet of an individual is effected by gender believes prevail in the society. Harris has highlighted the same issue and commented, "Gender variation in diet has probably has a long history, especially associated with women. The tendency to restrict the diet of adult female is more ambiguous and complex in its ramifications especially applied to pregnant and lactating women" (1984).

Before going in to detail discussion about the relation between the phenomena of gender and food, it would be better if we have a clear idea about the notion of gender. All the cultures divide its members in to two distinct groups of male and female. The distinction is made on the basis of sex. The confusion between the concept of sex and gender is made clear by different social scientist, sex refers to the biological division in to female and male while gender refers to

that if young girls eat chicken they will not find a husband and if married women eat chicken the born children will be deformed.

The respondent also told to Huston that about socially accepted norms, Katona Apte explained the case of the rural Indian house hold where at meal times the wife feeds the husband first, then children boys before girls and then lastly herself. Also the portions of nourishing foods such as meat, fish, eggs and milk are served to the men first because it is believed that they need it more than women (1987).

In low income group this discrimination against female in dietary intake usually is found worst because they have little nutritional substances which is preferably given to productive male. The same situation has been high lighted by Harris and Elizabeth among the poor, "discrimination against women and children in food intake has often been explained as necessary to secure an adequate energy intake for the male household head to find and perform work." (1978).

Again in strict patriarchal societies gender discrimination in food distribution among family members, is also very strict. In this respect , Pearson has written in her article, "Old wives or young mid- wives ? women as care takers of health, the case study of Nepal." "They (women) prepared the foods such as milk, egg and vegetables may be scares and in variably offered 1st to men and honoured visitors. Women's health and nutritional state during pregnancy is often unsatisfactory and this will effect the baby's health and resistance to infection."

Mandelbaum has also same point of view about Indian wives that at meals the women customarily serve all the men 1st and eats only after the men have finished and risen (1985). Chowdhry also has presented the same situation in his article "girl child victim of gender bias", "It is the duty of the female members of the family not only cook but to serve the food to male members 1st including brothers. It is because of this and many other reasons that we are faced with low weight birth of babies and larger percentage of female suffering from malnutrition particularly anaemia."

In Pakistani society, it is a social norm that male are served 1st, in this respect Hafeez has said that in a patriarchal family structure, still female is to serve her man rather than to eat with him and cut a sorry figure if the meal is not properly cooked and served(1981). Males receive preferential treatment in the allocation of staple food resources in health and preferential treatment during illness when special food for health need are secure on their behalf. When a women is ill or pregnant , provision for securing special foods are rarely made (Nichter,1980).

Many authors have discussed the issue, why the woman give male's preferential treatment in distribution of food. In this reference different authors have pointed out different reasons. From the above paragraph, we can conclude that in most cases females are the person who cook food and serve (distribute) it, as in patriarchal societies female don't have any status by herself, but as their social position is dependent on men that is a reason they give preference to the males in the food distribution. In this respect Abdullah has said, "Mother's sacrifice for her son is another basic rule of women's behaviour, since he is her future (in patriarchal society) that is reason mother's give their son more than their daughters. Since the head women has

control over the food and can express favouritism through food distribution (1982,90pp). We found sign of male child preference from above quotation reason is in patriarchal society after the birth of son female's position in her husband's house become strong. Mandelbam has presented very miserable picture of the life of female after marriage in the house of in laws but this situation became relax after the birth of baby boy which is also symbolises in eating pattern(1985). He has quoted Manage, the son is her social redeemer and hence forth her importance in the family tends gradually to increase. In *Ramkheri* village the change in her position is symbolised in the eating pattern. When she first arrives in the household, she eats last of all after the other women. Later she eats at the same time, but turned away from other women as a sign of respect and of her diffidence before them. Some married women may deliver a male child and some a female child. If a male child is born, she may succeeded in changing the attitude of her husband and in laws (Devsia,1991). That is a reason women give her male child preference in provision of food and health care facilities, so that she can maintain her better status with the survival of male child. The distribution of food is highly effected by the male preference which is in fact a form of gender bias. Sarker has given the reasons of male child preference in his article that, "the son also provide security against emergencies and parents often expect to depend upon them in old age. It is also observed in kamnagar that the bond between the husband and the wife may be cemented by sons, who may bring the spouses closer together. Sons also provide a source of pride for the future and motivate the parents to take more care for sons because the son is considered the light of lineage" (1988,9;1).

Due to above mentioned reasons, usually it is tried that male child is specially served so male members and especially male children has better nutritional status. This situation is expressed

by Pryer when he has described nutritional status of Hindu widow Mina's family, "All household members except the son are acutely undernourished."

Another aspect of gender bias in food distribution is based on hot/cold syndrome of food items. Hot/cold food classification have been found to vary enormously in some part of Mexico and Mexican American culture (Currier-1996). In rural Haiti both life states and foods are classified along a hot/cold continuum, (Jean and Wiese, 1976).

Holly Mathews has said that the taboos, superstitions and aversions seem to be associated with the nature of the food items like the hot/cold classification. She has further stated, "the hot/cold dichotomy is a part of the humoral pathology of hypocrites who attributed instinct qualities to a number of disparate phenomenon including types of illness, foods, plants and even super natural beings" (1983). It is considered that female's body is hot while male's is cold. In this respect Jean and Wiese have mentioned in their article, "a female is always warmer than a male, a young person always warmer than an older. The hottest of these states is that of the women during the 1st three post partum months" (1976).

It is also mentioned that this hot/cold dichotomy of foods effect the diet of females. "An even more serious limitation upon the nutritional intake of these women, however is cultural hot/cold food restrictions stemming from humoral medical beliefs-----37 staples remaining after applying other restrictions 27 are denied the lactating women because of hot/cold food beliefs.... one can appropriate better the potential for malnutrition among lactating Haitian women attributable to adherence of humoral based hot/cold food beliefs. The diets of pregnant and lactating women of the low income groups are deficient in several respects-----but an

important additional reason is the practice of food taboos which prevented the intake of certain nutrient foods both during pregnancy and lactation. The fear of a difficult delivery as a consequence of a large infant also prevented some pregnant women from consuming adequate amounts of foods.

The discussion of morning sickness introduces two important health concept which influence the quality of food eaten during pregnancy; heat and toxicity. The villagers has considered pregnancy as a time when body heat increases. An analogy is sometimes drawn between a woman's body being heated in the same way as a fruit during the process of ripening. Most fruits are deemed by villagers to be hot in their unripe state and relatively cold when ripe. As in the ripening process, pregnancy is a time of rapid transformation and development.

A woman's body is naturally hot during the process. Her body becomes cool when the baby is fully ripened, when she delivers. Minor swelling of hands and feet are seen as ubiquitous sign of increased heat in the body during pregnancy and is not paid much concern. Burning, sensation during urination, scanty urine or white discharge are taken more seriously as sign of significant over heat. These conditions are generally treated by herbal medicines, because the latter are generally ascribed to be heating for the body and this contraindicated during pregnancy. Abortion is commonly attributed to over heat in the body , as is the delivery of a child deemed premature. The very classification of premature baby is linked to ideas involving the effect of over heat.

During pregnancy period, usually those items which are considered hot, are kept away from the diet of the females. The eating of food classified as heating are decreased if not restricted

during pregnancy in order that a pregnant woman's already heated body may not become excessively hot, resulting in abortion. For this reason fruit considered heating such as pumpkin bitter gourd and heating grains such as wheat are avoided. The intake of salt, a heating substance, is likewise reduced. The eating of foods classified as cooling is advocated including such items as tender coconut, water, green gram, millet, amaranth and cumin (Nichter, 1983).

During pregnancy the eating of foods classified as heating producing or heating aggravating are contraindicated. These foods include jack fruit and unctuous vegetables such as brinjal, vine spinach and drum stick. They also include some of the most commonly eaten and valuable resources of protein, including popular varieties of fish and black gram (api). By the classification of food items as many nutrient food substances which are easily available at low prices, are kept away from the diet of pregnant females.

Helman has described the avoidance of hot foods and medications by the Puerto Rican women during pregnancy because of the fear that the child will be born with a fever and rash. Foster has discussed the case of the East coast Malay women in Malaysia where a post partum woman is considered to be vulnerable especially to cold and hence all cold items are prohibited during the 40 days resting period following the delivering (1984). Harris in an attempt to explain the dietary privilege phenomena said that origins of dietary divergence may be deep in human pre-history, but such degrees of female subordination seem to have emerged largely with the evolution of ranked societies, as a woman's status came to depend on that of her male kin or husband. He has said, "thus repeatedly we found taboos superstitions and prohibitions

that seem to eliminate and reduce the potential sources of protein from the diet of pregnant, lactating and menstruating women" (1987).

✓ In Pakistan the nutritional situation of women is not better. According to Pakistan National Survey (1985-87), 48 % of young children are malnourished within which 10 % are severely so. The survey further emphasised the spread of anaemia among pregnant and lactating women 66% mothers age over 45 are iron deficient make them anaemic.

According to World Bank Country Study, women in Pakistan, "Some studies also indicate greater mortality among female children. This suggests the relative neglect of female infants and young girls due to an unconscious preference of sons". There is a relative negligence of girls in feeding and health care, because of an unconscious preference for sons in a society where women's status is low. ✓ While women require about three times more iron than men and are less likely to get enough. The Pakistan Nutrition Survey found that about 45% of pregnant and lactating women suffer from iron deficiency anaemia. Anaemia was found to prevail more among older than younger mothers.

✓ The nutrition survey also found caloric and protein deficiency to be the highest among pregnant and lactating women. The report of 1980 planning commission suggests that 61% of girls under age 5 years were malnourished compare to 52% of boys.

According to the report of situation analysis of children and women in Pakistan, mother's feel that the boys have greater nutritional needs, because they will do more strenuous work than girl, and that girls are naturally stronger. It is disregarded that women work may be just as

strenuous and that girl must be strong and healthy for later child bearing. An additional problem is that, certain rural groups believe that high protein foods such as eggs and meat lead to early puberty and so withhold them from girls. In adolescence there is a deterioration of girls nutritional status as their need for iron increases and is not met the normal spurt of growth around puberty does not generally occur.

- ✓ One study found that 52% of female sample of medical students (aged 17-20y) were below standard weight. Girls thus enter in adulthood under nourished and through early marriage and repeated pregnancies perpetuate the vicious cycle of malnutrition. This immediate cause of higher mortality are not yet fully clear. It has been speculated that weaning practices are one factor, also boys receive more and promptly taken to the health services in case of illness.
- ✓ According to the report of Beijing conference, "lesser attention to the health and nutritional needs of the girl child is deeply rooted in the perceived role of women and girls in the society, which assigns them an economically inactive reproductive and domestic role. There is greater concern for the physical well being of boys based on their prospective economic role, and thus the perception that they have higher nutritional needs".
- ✓ A part from it in some areas, foods such as eggs, meat etc. which are considered to contribute to early puberty, are withheld from girls. Girls also have less opportunities for recreation, physical exercise and exposure to fresh air than boys. All these factors contribute to the poor nutritional status of the vast majority of girls.

In Pakistan markedly higher mortality, except at the neonatal stage, was found for girls than for boys (Alam and Cleland, 1984; Sathar, 1985; Tauseef et al., 1992). Discrimination against girls in intra-family food distribution and medical care has been the explanation for the excess female mortality (Sathar, 1987). Watto, H.R., when has provided an eye view of the life style and times of the village daughters, has recalled his own childhood times and started to narrate the situation from his own house. According to him, "I can still vividly recall those moments from my adolescence days when sitting on a mat in the compound of our village house for the evening meal, my mother would serve me and my brothers large bowls of milk while my sisters would be given their share in small glasses" (1997).

He has further stated, "It wasn't that my mother did not love her daughters. She loved them and had always striven to ensure that they got good food and looked more prime and proper than their friends. Yet at times I felt that they were not looked after the way I and my brothers were "Who had to be the source of comfort for their parents in their old age". In fact, this attitude wasn't restricted to my parents only----- almost every house in the village saw to its son in a way different from the way it saw to a daughter. And after a decade and a half, I still see no change in it. This typical village attitude towards their children stems from various social attitudes and pretension which over the centuries have turned in to norms.

In an patriarchal village Milieu, where a male member is believed to be bread-winner and a female is restricted to the role of procreation, the birth of son is believed as a great gift of God. It is believed that one day he will grow up to financially support the family. As such, from the day of his birth to entering the youth age, he is pampered and doted upon by the

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parents and others. Also every pain is taken to ensure that he gets good food ,good clothing and good education, even if relative terms”.

Similarly when he has talked about the birth of a girl child, he has commented that it is seen as a great misfortune. When he has provided account of the duties and health situation of females; he has said, “she prepares the family’s meal but eats only after the men have finished and mostly has to settle for the left over. A typical village women can be anaemic, malnourished and helplessly unaware of ways to change her life. A continued population growth and high fertility rate with little spacing between children restrict the ability of village women to break out of their unhealthy lifestyle”.

In the end after taking in to account the above mentioned literature review ,we would be able to conclude that the phenomena of gender is very important in the life of an individual. In our country it effects almost all spheres of individual’s life either it is food, education, provision of health facilities etc. It formulates two different standards for male and female individual. And male gets privilege in all spheres of life while females are discriminated as being women is less than human being. This discriminatory treatment against females can be easily observed in the distribution of food among the family members. Females who usually control the sphere of food (preparation and distribution), they themselves eat in the end from the left over items after serving all the males. This customary treatment in distribution of food leads towards the poor nutritional state of women and as their diet is also restricted through different sort of food taboos during different life stages.

VILLAGE PROFILE

2.1 Introduction

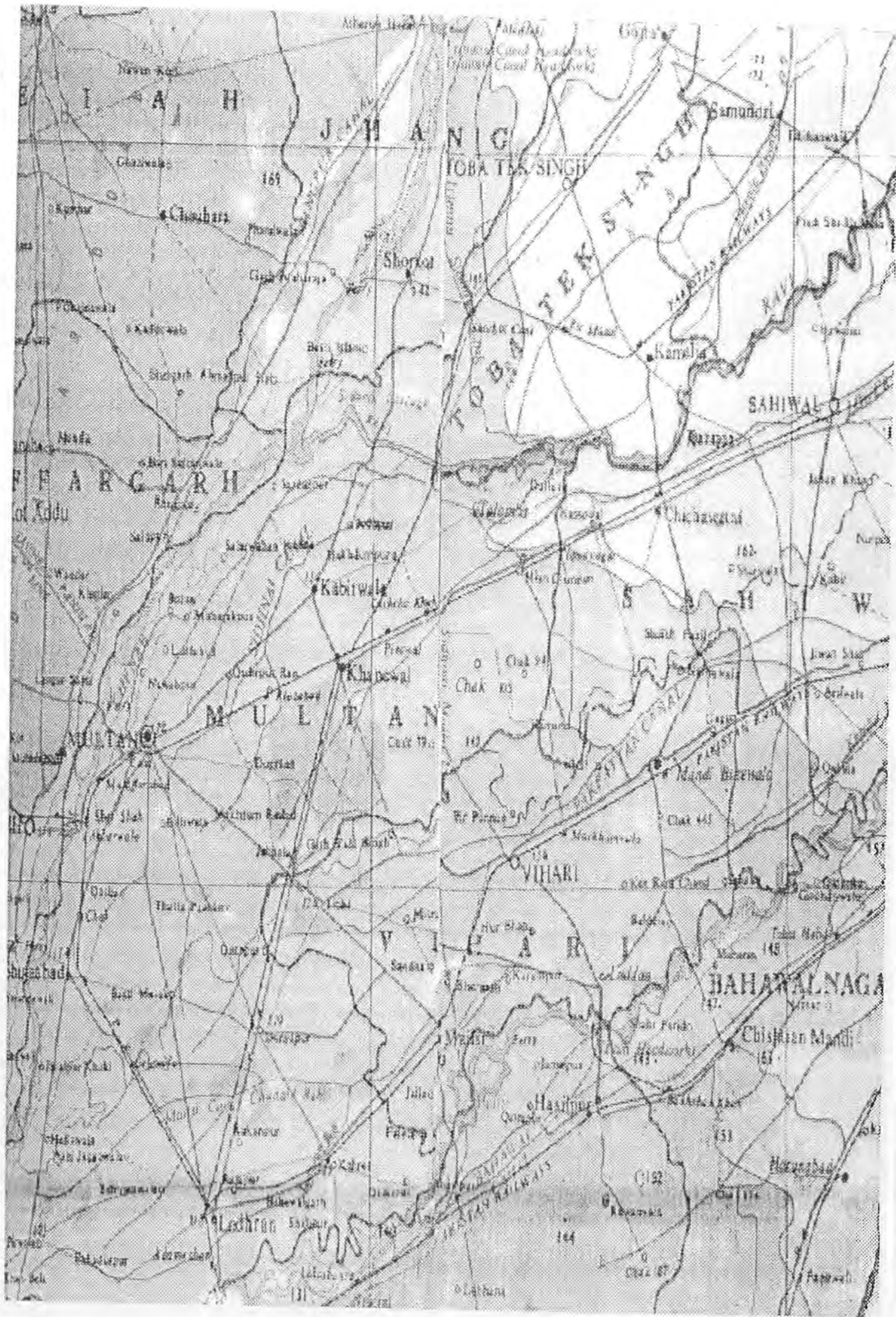
Preamble to any community research is thorough study of the researched locale in all respects. In this regard the present chapter maintains a demographic and ecological approach in eliciting the life style of the people. It propounds on the geographical, historical and socio-economic standing of the village, attempting to put the reader well into picture.

2.2 Location

Santy Phatak, a village of Punjabi speakers, lies within the boundaries of *Multan* Division. It is located in the north east of *Dist. Vehari* and south west of *Teh. Burewala*. On the way from *Multan* to *Burewala*, situated a small town named *MachianWala*. *Santy Phatak* is at a distance of 3 Kilo metres north east of this town and 22 Kilo metres from *Vehari* city. It lies at 31 latitude and 72.2 longitude.

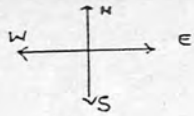
2.3 Climate

The atmosphere of district *Vehari* as other parts of *Multan* Division is severe. The maximum temperature recorded in summer and winter is 105 F and 73 F respectively. The minimum temperature sometimes touches 49 F. The hottest months are May, June July, and August. The



J H E L U M
TOBA TEK SINGH
FEROZPUR
TOBA TEK SINGH
MULTAN
SAHIWAL
BAHAWALNAGAR

Other labels include: Chouhara, Shortal, Kabiwala, Khapowal, Vihari, Hasilpur, and various canal names like Jhelum Canal and Ravi Canal. The map also shows the Multan Railway and several smaller towns and villages.



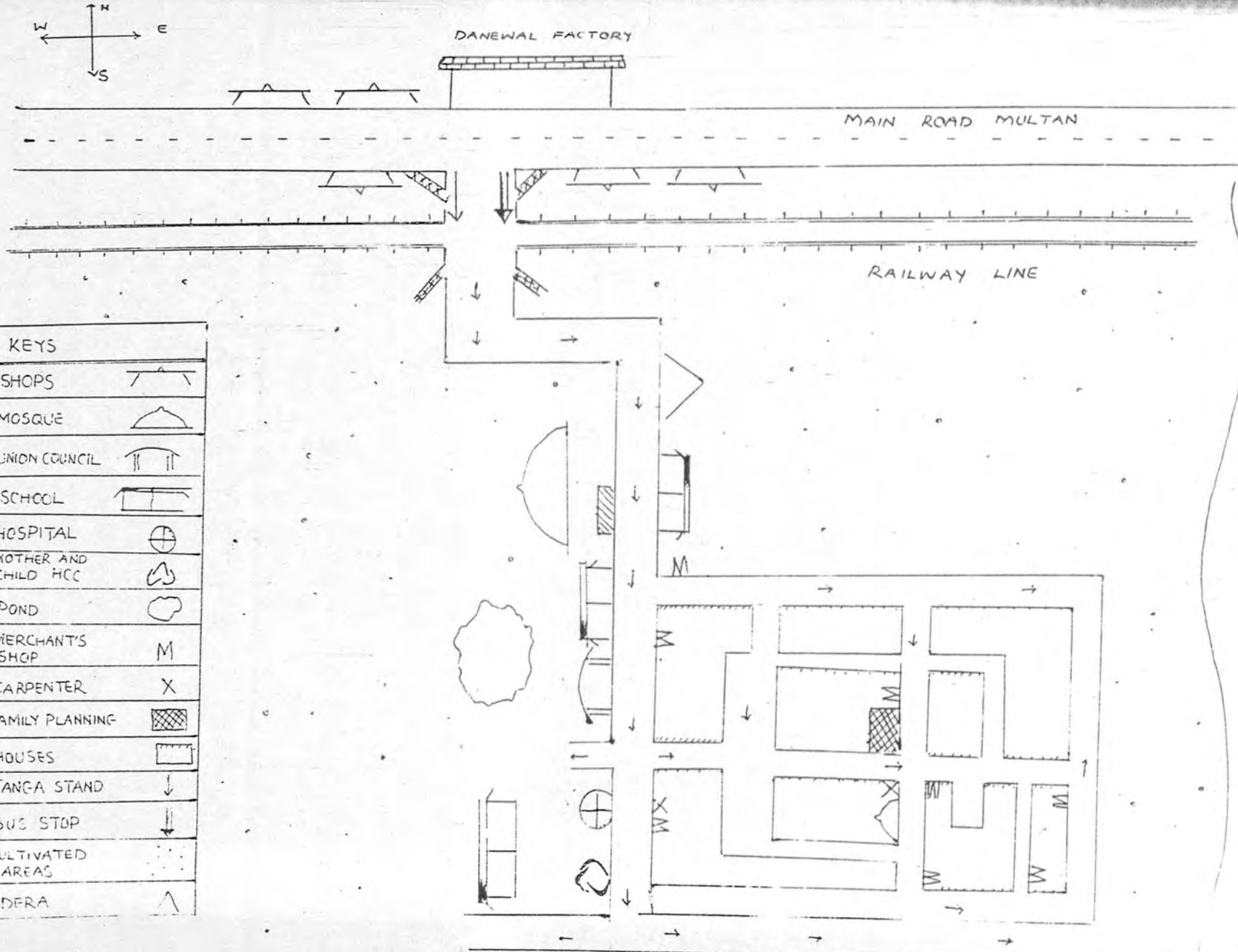
DANEWAL FACTORY

MAIN ROAD MULTAN

RAILWAY LINE

CANAL-6L (CHORRIYAN WALI THALI)

| KEYS | |
|----------------------|---|
| SHOPS | |
| MOSQUE | |
| UNION COUNCIL | |
| SCHOOL | |
| HOSPITAL | |
| MOTHER AND CHILD HCC | |
| POND | |
| MERCHANT'S SHOP | M |
| CARPENTER | X |
| FAMILY PLANNING | |
| HOUSES | |
| TANGA STAND | ↓ |
| BUS STOP | ⇓ |
| CULTIVATED AREAS | |
| DERA | ^ |

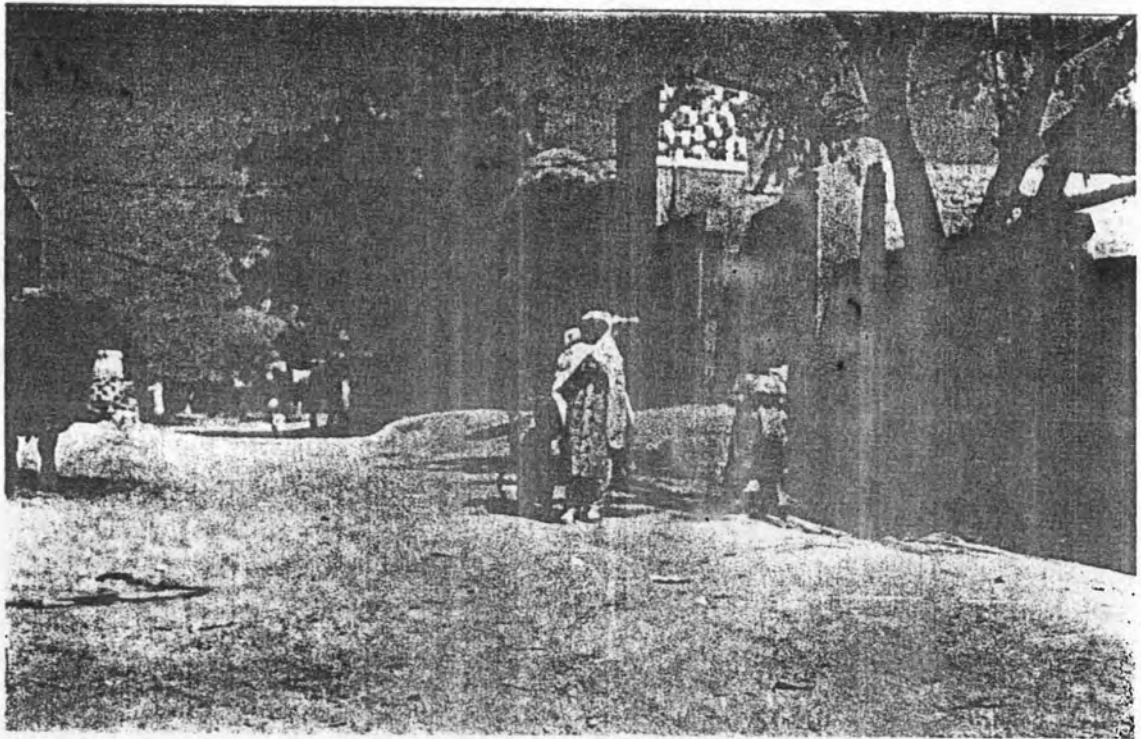


heat and dust of this region are proverbial. Day temperature in the summer months between March and September is high, but the nights are comparatively cool. The highest day temperature is recorded in the months of May and June. The winter is pleasant, the coldest months being the later half of December and January.

During summer dust storm have been one of the chief characteristics of the region but now the frequency of these dust storms have been decreased due to agricultural development and increase in population of this area. The region has enough moon soon rains in the month of July, August and September. In this season, marshes and ponds are formed after few yards and due to lack of hygiene and sanitation facilities, these places become breeding places for mosquitoes and flies in this village.

2.4 Historical Back Ground

The history of *Santy Phatak* can be traced back to the end of European era, when the authorities of Faisalabad Agricultural College had decided to give 48 Kanals to every graduate of the college in the southern Punjab. The under lie objective was to start cultivation on the barren lands of the region. As a result two graduates of this college got land nine miles away from Mundi Burewala. They had started cultivation with their servants and *Muzaras*. A village came into being in the Mauza Machiane-Wala that composed of two *Zimindar* families, with their *Muzaras and Kummies*. After partition, many migrants who were issued land here, they also became the member of this village. By chance one of the Zimindar was *Arain* and most of



A view of the village street.

the migrant who got land here, were also Arain. Since then the village has been dominated by *Arain* caste who are mainly agriculturist.

2.5 Dwelling Pattern

The village houses have been built in cluster. They do not follow any particular orientation however most of them are built in such a way that the back and side walls of the houses are adjacent to one another. There are large court yards in front of houses with main door opening out in the streets. The joint walls of the houses allow the women to communicate with one another by using roof as short cuts.

The roofs are flat being made of mud laid over beam. Mostly houses have single story and there is one big room in the house which is beautifully decorated with utensils and other household things. Beside this room, there are few more rooms for living. In one corner of the house, there is the family's cooking place, something partly sheltered from sun and rain. The cooking place usually consist of one or two earthen *chullah* and a *tawi* or *tandoor*. In which fire wood is used for cooking. The other corner of house is reserved for cattle but mostly families have separate heads for keeping cattle and buffaloes apart from the house.

The total number of household in the village according to union council record is 115. The data about nature of the village houses is presented in Table No.1.

Table No.1

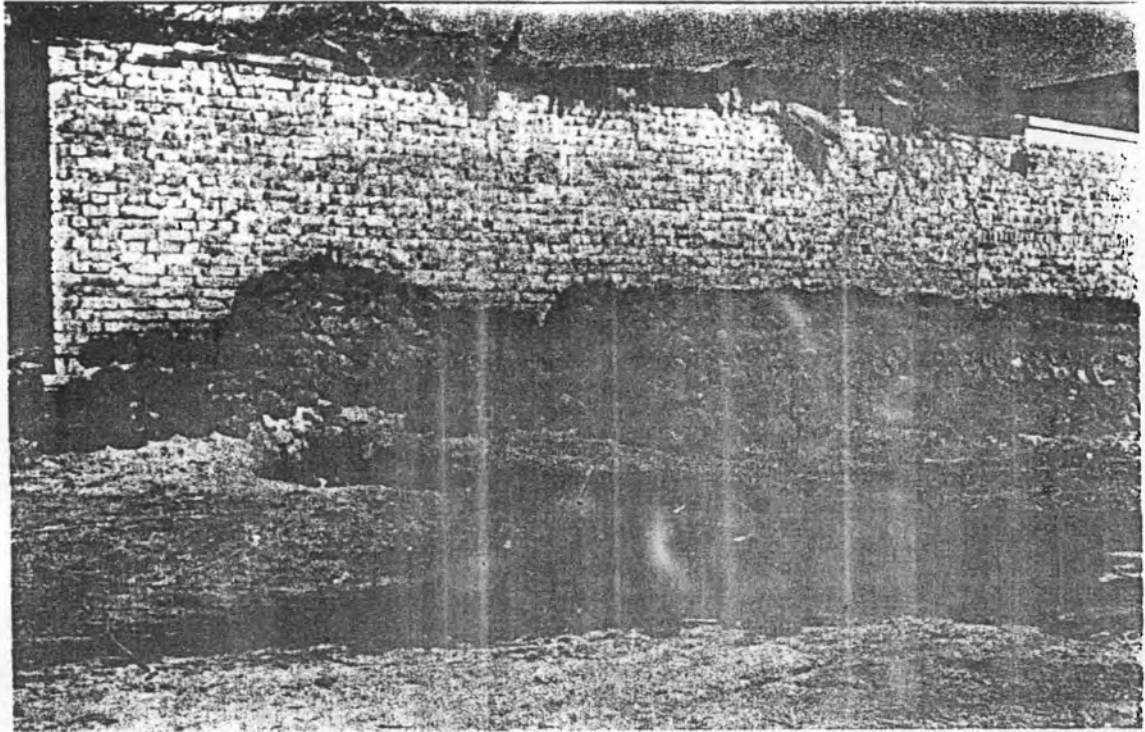
Dewelling Pattern

| House Type | Number | Percentage |
|----------------------|--------|------------|
| <i>Kutchra</i> | 23 | 20 % |
| <i>Kutchra/Pacca</i> | 78 | 68 % |
| <i>Pacca</i> | 14 | 12 % |
| Total | 115 | 100 % |

In the village, *Katcha Pacca* (semi cemented) houses are in greater number. However the rate of conversion in to *Pacca* (cemented) houses is on an increase. There is a tendency to cement floor in semi *Katcha*(*earthen*) houses. A complete *Pacca*(cemented) house is considered a symbol of prosperity and wealth. *Kutchra* houses are usually dark and lack proper ventilation due to which fresh air is not presented in rooms. Most of these houses are very congested. According to medical scientist, such structure is injurious to health.

2.6 Hygienic condition

Eighteen percent of the houses lack bathroom facility while only 23 % have toilet facilities. A few houses have only bath room but do not have latrine. While only 8 % have proper flush system. There is not any arrangement of removal of water waste, so people prefer to go out in the fields that can make their soil fertile. The village lacks basic hygienic and sanitation facilities. Also the village sweeper put out the water wastes from the drainage and put down



The sanitary condition of the village

aside of it. Garbage is thrown either in the fields or at the street corners which is later on scattered by hens, dogs and cats.

2.7 Population Dynamics

According to the acquired data, the total population of the village is 753 inhabitants. Which is composed of 402 males and 351 females. Male and female population is tabulated in table No 3.

Table No -3 (A)

Male and Female Population in Santy Phatak

| Gender | Number | Percentage |
|--------|--------|------------|
| Male | 402 | 53% |
| Female | 351 | 47% |
| Total | 753 | 100% |

According to socio-economic forms that were completed after a survey of one hundred and fifteen households of the village the number of male and female in different age categories is as follows

Table No- 3 (B)

Population Distribution with Respect to Age

| Age Span | Males | Female | Total |
|-----------|-------|--------|-------|
| 0 - 5 Y | 46 | 38 | 84 |
| 5 - 12 Y | 89 | 57 | 124 |
| 12 - 20 Y | 82 | 76 | 158 |
| 20 - 50 Y | 148 | 143 | 291 |
| 50 -----> | 59 | 37 | 96 |



The infant mortality rate of the village is very high which is 21 % of the total born children. As 1-2 children has died per household while the average number of children per household is eight. And the ratios of girl children death is higher than infant boys which is 61 %.

Table - No 4

Distribution Of Infant Mortality With Respect To Sex

| Sex | Number | Percentage |
|--------|--------|------------|
| Male | 49 | 39% |
| Female | 77 | 61% |
| Total | 126 | 100% |

2.8 Social Organization

Quoms

The village population is composed of variety of *quoms* among which *Arain* are in majority. Sub *quoms* in the village have been driven from main *quoms* on the basis of genealogies. The distribution of population according to different *quoms* and sub-*quoms* is given in table No 2.

Table No -2

Quoms And Sub-quoms In The Village

| S. No | Quoms & Subquoms | Percentage Of People |
|-------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | <i>Arain</i> | 69 % |
| 2 | <i>Gujar</i> | 7 % |
| 3 | <i>Cheima</i> | 5 % |
| 4 | <i>Sayal</i> | 5 % |
| 5 | <i>Bhutti</i> | 3 % |
| 6 | <i>Kummi</i> | 11 % |

The category of *Kummi* (them self are) quom consist of the household who engaged in *sapie* system and also those whose ancestors was engaged in this system. These *quoms* are based on their profession. These quoms are *Lohar, Turkhan, Jolahey, Kumhar, Naie* etc.

2.3.1 Marriage Pattern

Islam allows marriage to the first cousin, and cousin-marriage is widely practised throughout Pakistan. Even when marriage is not to a close relative, marriage is usually within the village, the *Zat*, the cast or the sub-tribe. Economic explanations for this pattern, i.e. keeping property in the family, are only partially satisfactory, and it too is bound up with concept of honour. The compensatory, tendency of marrying at a distance is traditionally only found among some elites. So they are endogamous in this sense but now the trends change quickly with the changing demands of the society.

Presently most of the people marry their children, whenever they find a suitable match irrespective of their cast. Because now social status and economic position of the household is becoming more important than the caste. But the higher cast i.e. *Arian* still preferred to marry within their own caste group. The villagers have marital relationship with almost all of the associated village, due to which strong reciprocal ties are observed among them. The marriage rites are usually performed immediately after the age of adolescence.

Dowry is an other basic principle of marriage. The dowry is given to daughter on her marriage. The amount of given dowry varies according to the socio-economic position of bride's and

groom's family. This institution of dowry is a major factor due to which daughters are considered a burden by the parents.

2.8.2 Polygamy and divorce

Two aspects of the Pakistani family spring from Muslim law. Men are allowed to have up to four wives at the same time, and marriage is not regarded as indissoluble, with divorce being relatively easy for men. Both these aspects have been modified, to the benefit of women, by Pakistan's Muslim Family Law Ordinance of 1961, though this is not necessarily observed all over the country. In fact, neither divorce nor polygamy are statistically highly prevalent in the village, though the possibility of occurrence arguably adds insecurity to women's lives.

The second marriage for women is considered bad in this community. So the future of widow is dark among them and they are not supposed to be remarried. The widow who have children can never dream of second marriage. In few cases only those widows are married who do not have children by their 1st husband. In simple words people don't like any widow to marry again.

2.8.3 Family Size And Structure

The average household size in the village was 9 to 10 people. The traditional form in most rural areas is an extended or stem family. Families with their in the village were nuclear as well as joint and extended. Sons after getting married prefer to live Parents as living in a separate



The Village girl and their instructor busy in the local handicraft school.

house after marriage was criticised. Still it was found that nuclear families were in a greater number because now the economy was not totally agricultural which required a large number of working hands to put labour collectively. The village wives mostly preferred to live in nuclear families so that earning of their husbands are not shared and also because they wanted to avoid conflict with in-laws which may raised while living together. Table No 5 presents nature of families in *Santy Phatak*.

Table No.5

Family Types In Santy Phatak

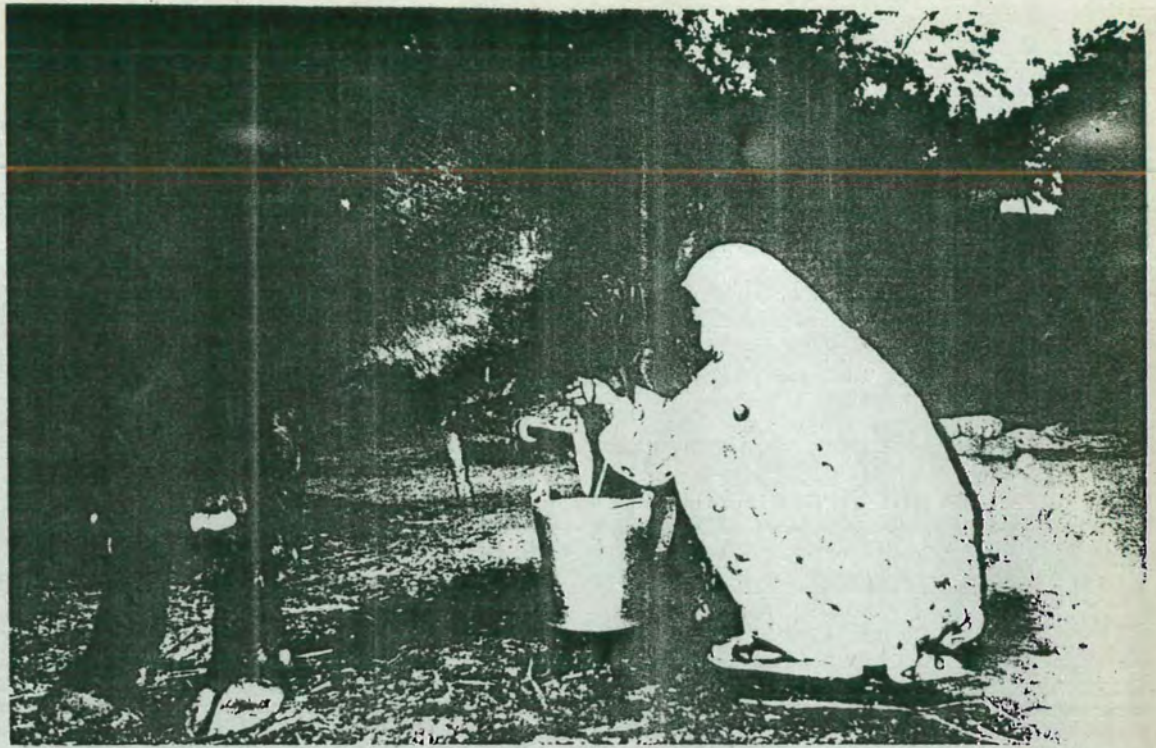
| Type Of Family | No of Household | Percentage Of Families |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Nuclear | 54 | 47 % |
| Joint | 36 | 31 % |
| Extended | 25 | 22 % |
| Total | 115 | 100 % |

(Source Field Research)

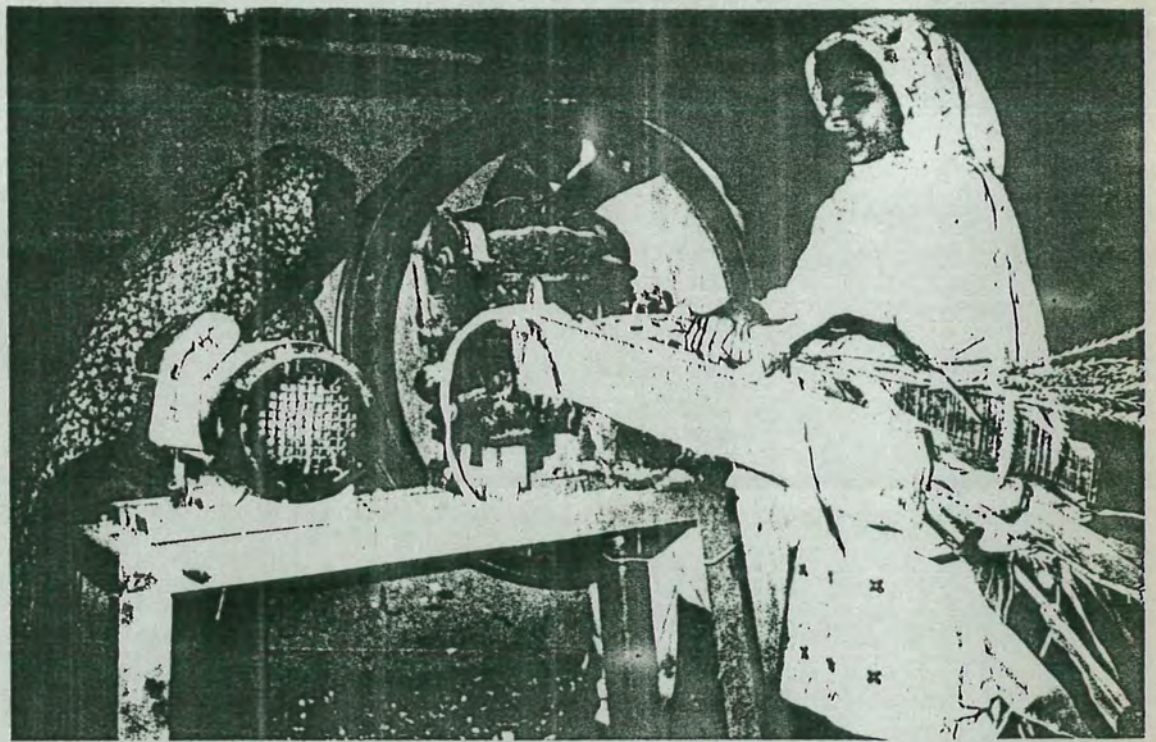
2.8.4 Child spacing and Family Planning

Because of the traditional view that a woman's chief function is to be a wife and a mother, and because family honour might be encouraged by delaying marriage, girls are married, frequently on attaining puberty.

The young bride is unlikely to have the will, the knowledge or the decision making power to postpone first pregnancy. Not only the husband but the mother- in-law will exert pressure for her to bear children, and in many case she will feel that her status vis-à-vis other women in the



A female milks her buffalo



B Male and female young members of the family busy in the daily activity of fodder cutting

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household will only be improved by becoming a mother. It is found in the village that women get pregnant soon after marriage. The result is a long childbearing career for the average of over six children per women. Age-specific fertility rates are highest for women between 25 and 29 years old. Great hatred prevail against family planning programme in the village. It is believed that family planning is in-fact against the teaching of Islam i.e. a reason Health Visitors are discriminated in the village and people looked down upon them. Early and frequent childbearing is a cause of poor maternal health because women come to motherhood with a history of malnutrition and over work, which continue throughout their childbearing career.

2.8.5 Women And Girls In The Family

For very large sections of the population, cultural traditions override any new rights created by legislation. These traditions ensure that girls are socialised into obedience and submission, a concern with modesty and reputation, and home based role. They also encourage a view of girls as temporary visitors in their parents' home, consider them a burden in which investment is inadvisable. These traditions and accompanying roles have various adverse effects on the life-chances of girls and women.

Women and children eat separately, and after the adult males have eaten as much as they want. This may lead to poor nutritional standards among women and children, especially girls. The question of son preference' and its possible effects on the survival of girls children and over all sex ratios.



Two young girls of low income group performing their daily activities.

The characterisation of the women as maintainers of the home gives them huge burden of work. Often women are involved in specifically 'female' tasks, as well as putting as much or more work into agriculture as men. The dowry system prevalent in the village encourages parents to look on daughters as a burden.

2.9 The Complexion Of The People

The complexion of the people is determined by the climate and temperature and skin colour vary from fair to dark. The village people generally have wheaten complexion tanned by the intense heat of the summers. They are good structured having prominent features with dark eyes and dark hairs generally.

2.10 Cultural Aspect

2.10.1 Dress Code

The dress code of the village is shalwar kamiz. Males wear *kamiz* or *Kurta* with *shalwar* or *Dhotie*. *Putka* or *safa* is another part of males dress which is hanged on shoulder or kept on head in sun. But now the young male usually wear shalwar kamiz. Dhotie and kurta is considered the dress of farmers. The village females usually wear shalwar kamiz and doputa. They also use *chadar* to cover themselves when they go out side the house. While some of them use "*Burqa*" (veil). But now these women are in minority who wear "*Burqa*"



Dress code of the village female



Dress code of the village female

2.10.2 Languages

The principle language of the village is Punjabi. But urdu is also easily spoken and understood by the villagers. Some of the rich and educated village families they speak in urdu with their children. It is considered a sign of dignity if some one's children speak urdu.

2.10.3 Food pattern:

Type of the food taken by people in the village varies with season and depends on the economic conditions of the household. It is also affected by the hot/cold and gender perception of the people. The common diet of people is Roti made from wheat, eaten with vegetables and pulses. Rich food consisting of meat, rice, butter etc. is eaten by people who are economically well off. Fruits like apple, grapes, pomegranates are also most of the people take whenever is available.

The villagers take three meals a day in the morning, at noon and in the evening. Most of the people take their breakfast soon after sunrise. Lunch is taken at 12 O'clock and dinner is taken at sunset. Special dishes are prepared on different social and religious occasions e.g. sweet rice and milk's kheer is distributed on Gheharvien Sharif, Shab-e-Barat and Eid Milad-un-Nabi, by the families which are thought to be comparatively well off in the village.

2.10.4 Religion And Sects

The principal religion of the village is Islam. Any how two different sect of Islam are found here which are Sunni sect and shia's sect. The majority of the villagers belong to Sunni sect while only 6 house holds out of 115 house hold belong to shia's sect. The information regarding the profile of the village is based on three sources i.e. commissioner's office *Vehari*, union council office *santy phatak* and socio-economic survey done on 115 house holds of the village.

2.11 Sacred Places

Mosques and shrines are considered sacred places by the villagers. Mosque is locally called *Maseet*. It is a building made for the worshipping of Almighty Allah. There are two mosques in the village. One is situated at the beginning of the village which is called : "*Chitti Maseet*". While other is situated in the middle of the village. These are the places where people got religious education and doctrines. Every mosque had a loud speaker not only used for "*Azan*" but also utilised for the announcement of important messages like death news or misplacement of goods and children. All the two mosques represent the *sunni* sect of Islam. There is two graveyard in the village. Which are utilised by all villagers, with out any discrimination. The people visit the graveyard specially in the month of "*Muharam*".



An old woman who sell vegetable in front of her house.

2.12 Village Economy

2.12.1 Main Occupations of Male

The main occupation of the villagers is agriculture but young males are also attracted towards other jobs like joining army, air force, doing some business like shop keeping, running hotels etc. While some engaged in the inherited occupation like *Naiies*, shoemakers, maulvies, black smith and turkhan are following the occupation of their fore fathers. The main male occupation are shown in the table No . 6

Table No -6

Male Occupation Profile Of The Village Santy Phatak

| Nature of Job | Number | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------|------------|
| Govt. Servant | 12 | 10% |
| Wage Labour | 39 | 34% |
| Business Man | 30 | 26% |
| Small Farmer | 23 | 20% |
| Multiple Category | 11 | 10% |

The figures in percentage have been rounded off. Total number of working males in the category govt. servant includes school teachers, dispenser, peons, clerks, and people work in army and air force. The people engaged in wage labour work as loaders, drivers, electricians, plumbers and labours. While the people who are engaged in business run their shops, hotels, poultry farms, sell milk and egg etc. Multiple category includes people who are associated with

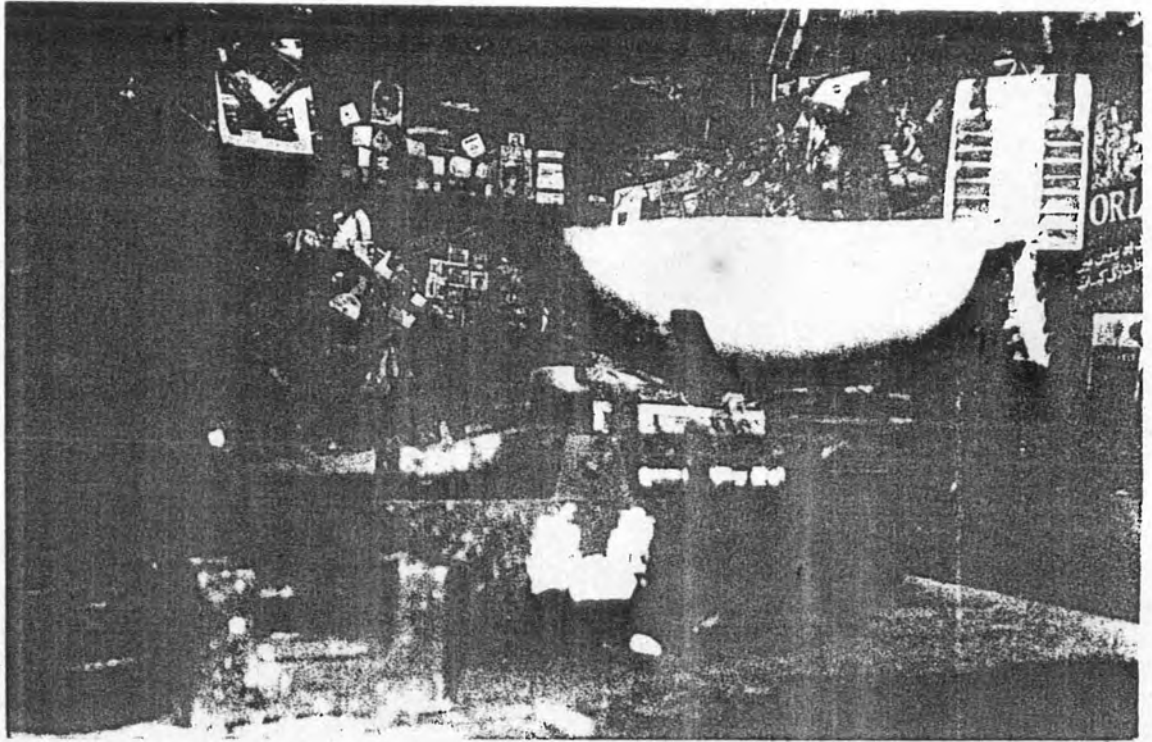
two or more occupation side by side e.g. a person who works as a peon. also does agriculture on his land. A part from household work, women are also engaged in agricultural activities. teaching sewing, knitting and embroidery works. However they are not inclined to do the jobs that could bring them some monetary income after working out side the house. Only two women of the village work as school teacher while three women are health workers but people look down upon them.

2.12.2 Agriculture

2.12.2.1 Cultivation Pattern

The main crops during Rabbi are wheat, grain, mustard and other cereals and during Kharif are, cotton, rice, maize and sugar cane. In addition to these two main crops. there are subsidiary crops known as "Zaid Rabi" like kharboza (melon) ,Tobacco and potatoes and "Zaid Kharif" like potatoes and chillies etc.

The harvesting of the crops is carried mostly by male labours except cotton which is picked mostly by female labours. But some rich farmers used threshers also. In the village most of the farmers have taken up mechanised cultivation with tractors. The use of organic and green manure's was very much restricted and was only confined to progressive farmers. The cow dung however was commonly used for manure purposes. The green manure crops like gowara were used to fed cattle in near past. But now the use of chemical fertiliser has gradually gained



A wife who run her husband's shop situated in the house.

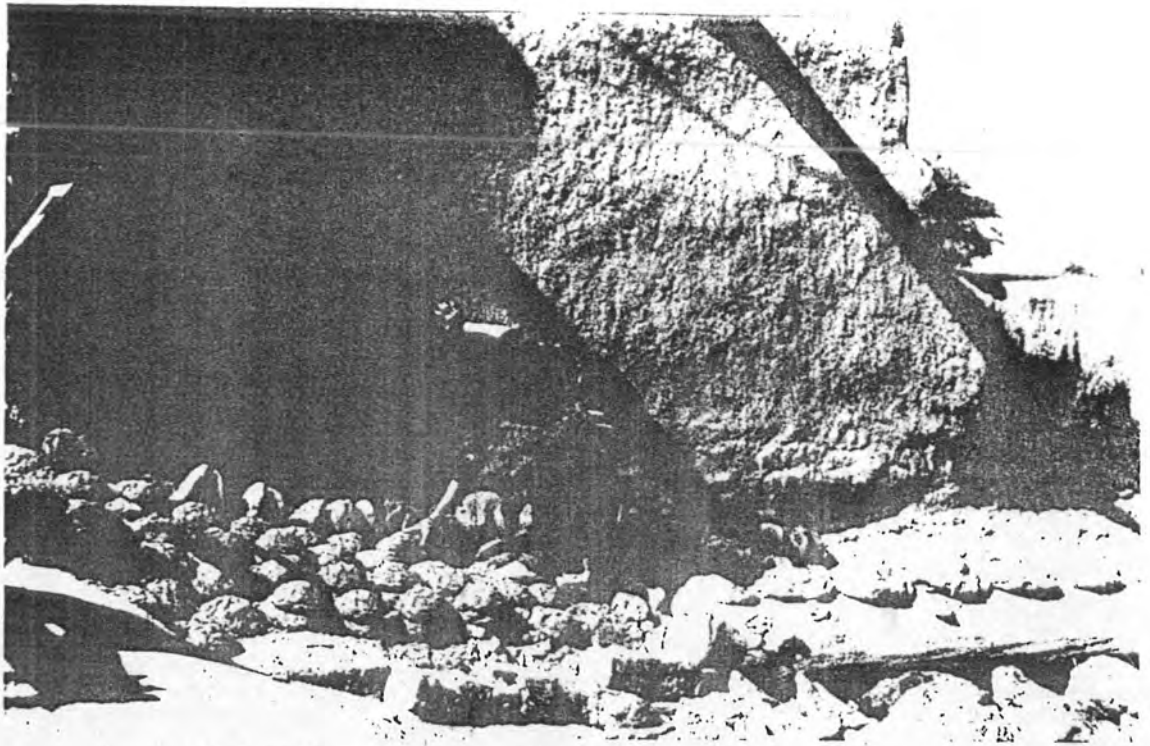
popularity and every year its use is on the increase. It is mostly applied to wheat, cotton, rice, sugar cane and potato crops. The main grown fruits are Mango, Malta, Kino, guava and water melon, melon. In the village many gardens are also found. The vegetables grown in the village are potatoes, chillies, onions, garlic, tomato, bringal, spinach, sag and sweet potatoes.

2.12.2.2 Irrigation System

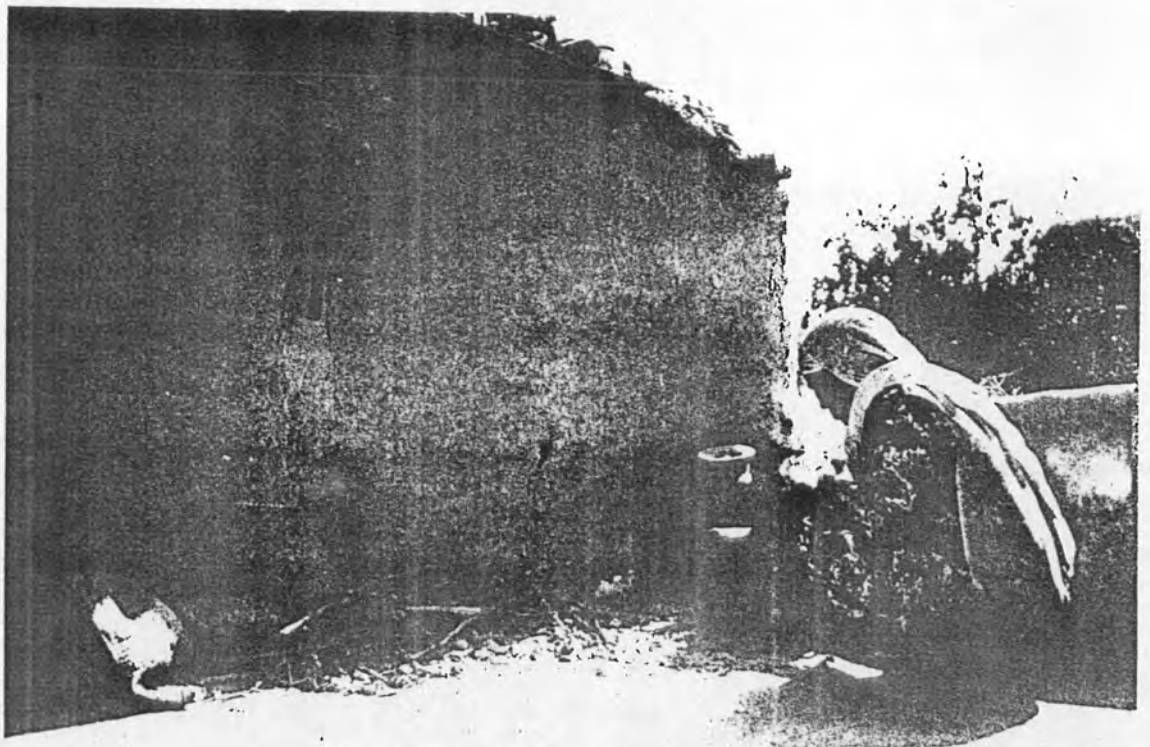
The major means of irrigation for cultivation are canals and tube wells. In the village their is term system (*وازی*) to irrigate land by canal water. The water drainage which are locally trend as "Khalas" (*کھال*) are used to get water from the canal *Choriyan Wali Jhal*. The other source of irrigation is tube wells. Some of the village wells are private while other are communal, means of irrigation that farmers share a tube well.

2.12.2.3 Village Shops

To buy food items and other things of daily use, there are eight shops with in the village. Although the quality of things in these shops is not good however because of easy access people are contented with this. Other than these shops, there is a small market on the bus stand of village. The people also buy daily utilities from this bus stop market. This market consist o shops containing cold drinks, sweets, fruits, pakoras, samosas, small hotels, etc. Another source of buying daily edible items is, the street hawker who bring vegetables, fruits, sugar, different Dalls, etc. on cycle, donkey Cart or on their heads.



A woman is making dung cake which are used as an important fuel.



Cooking on fire wood is not an easy task.

2.13 Economic Distribution of Household

According to per month income village household are divided in to three income groups.

Which is shown in Table No. 7

Table No.7

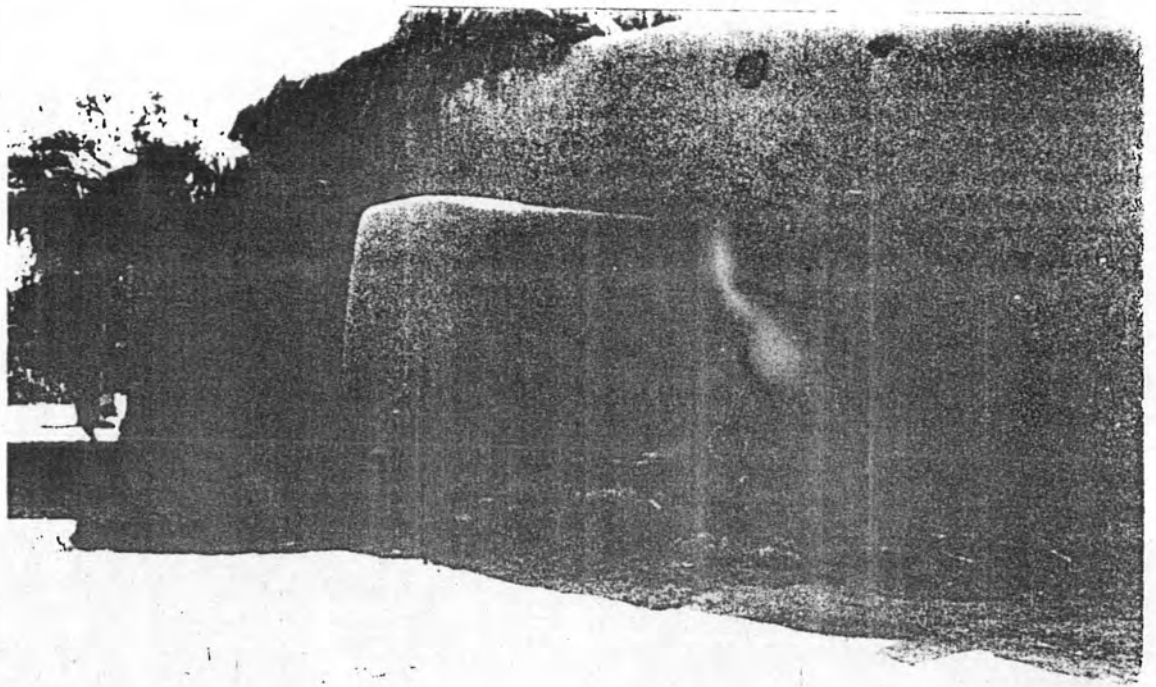
Distribution Of Village Household According To Per month Income

| Monthly Income | Number Of Household | Percentage |
|----------------|---------------------|------------|
| 500 - 1000 | 31 | 27 % |
| 1000 - 3000 | 61 | 53 % |
| Above 3000 | 23 | 20 % |

The households who raise monthly income from 500 to 1000 are wage labours small farmer and *kummies*. Those who raise income 1000-3000 per month, are farmers and businessmen while who have made to get more than 3000 are those who went abroad or are *big Zamindars*.

2.14 Basic Amenities of Life

As far as the facilities in the village are concerned, it has been noted that village was provided with electricity in 1972. Majority of the houses are provided connections and those which are not provided connections, themselves take connections from other neighbouring houses. It is quite rare that people enjoy electricity for a few days with out any break, most of the time it is not available even for 4- 5 days due to technical faults. Also the phenomena of load shedding is



A traditional source of drinking water

very common. In those days when electricity is provided the voltage of electricity decrease at night. The voltages are so short, that the people even can't use electric fan, T.V. or other daily utilities. During summer season this shortage of light do not allow the people to use fan.

Source of Drinking Water

In 1995, water is officially provided to the village. Almost all the houses are to given pipe lines of water. A store tank is built at one corner of the village from which water is supplied to the villagers. Any how people still use other sources of water e.g. hand pump, tube well etc. Tap water is supplied for 2-3 hours daily thrice a day, in the morning, at noon and in the evening. But sometimes it is not supplied even for a week.

Table No.8

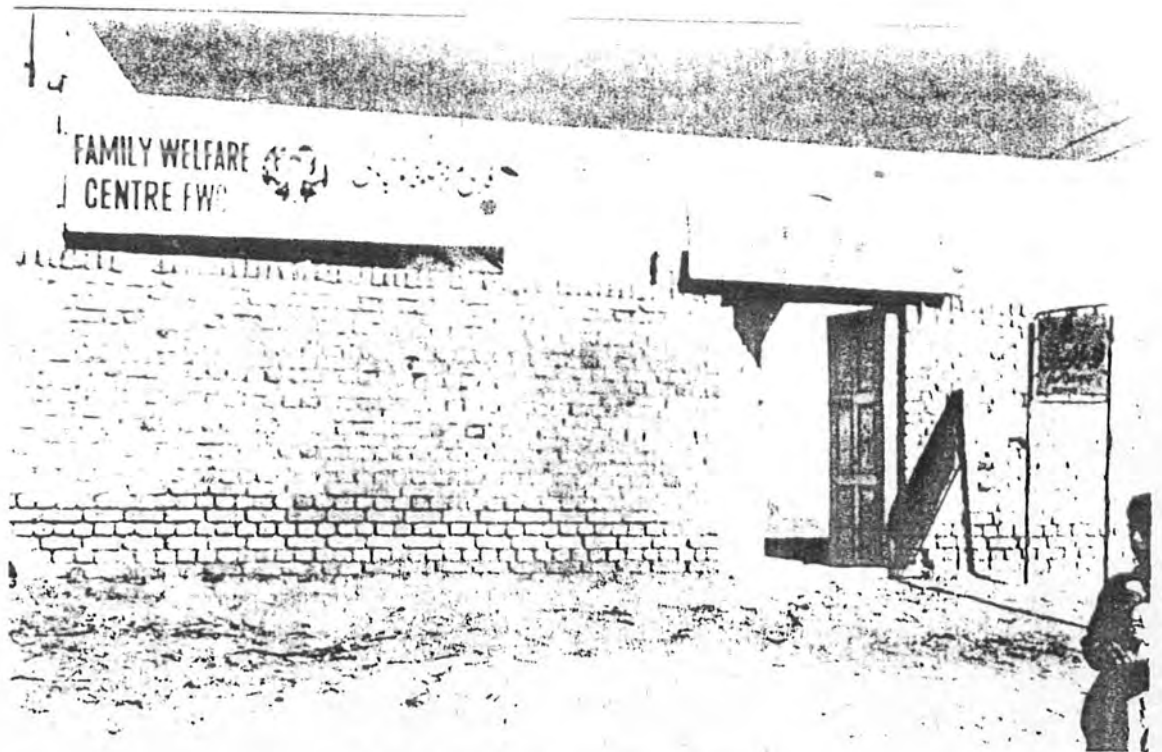
Source Of Drinking Water In Santy Phatak.

| Source of water | House Number | Percentage |
|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| Tap Water | 102 | 90% |
| Hand Pump | 8 | 7% |
| Tube well | 5 | 3% |

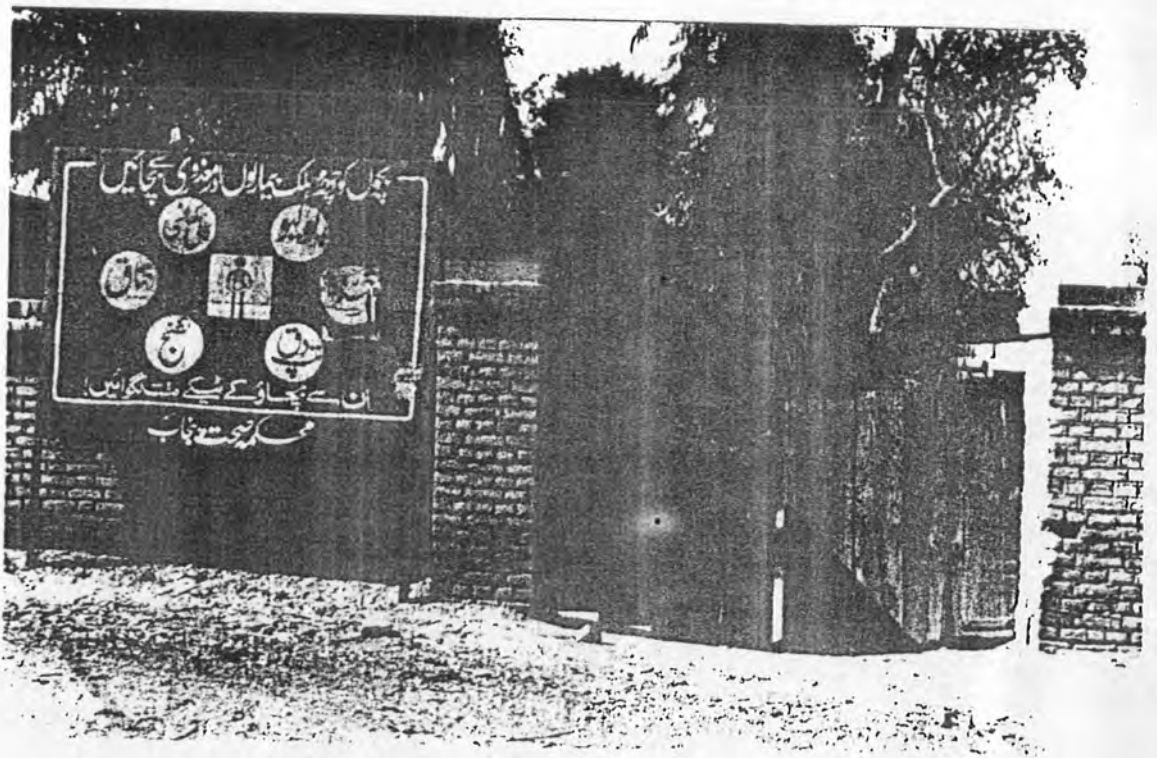
(Source :Field source)

Fuels Used

On village level, the fuels people mostly used are wood, karosene oil and coal in "tawies" and "chullahs".



The population welfare center.



Mother and child health care center.

Table No.9

Type Of Fuel Used By Household

| Type Of Fuel | No of Household | % Of Household |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Coal | 5 | 4% |
| Wood | 93 | 81% |
| Oil | 10 | 9% |
| Gas Slander | 7 | 6% |

The 81 % of house hold use wood for *chulkahs* and *tandoors* because it is cost free. They can easily collect it from around the fields and secondly it also keep their homes warm in winter. Oil is very costly for them so it is rarely used and oil stove are only found in econo. off families. Crops wastage are also used as fuel by poor people. They get it from the farmer. at free cost.

2.14.3 Telephone Facility

The village is also provided with public call office facility. The village people have connection with outer world through this telephone connection. But unfortunately all the villagers can't utilise this facility because it is controlled by the village. He has kept this phone in his house and general people aren't allowed to use this facility. *numberdar*

2.4.4 Postal facility

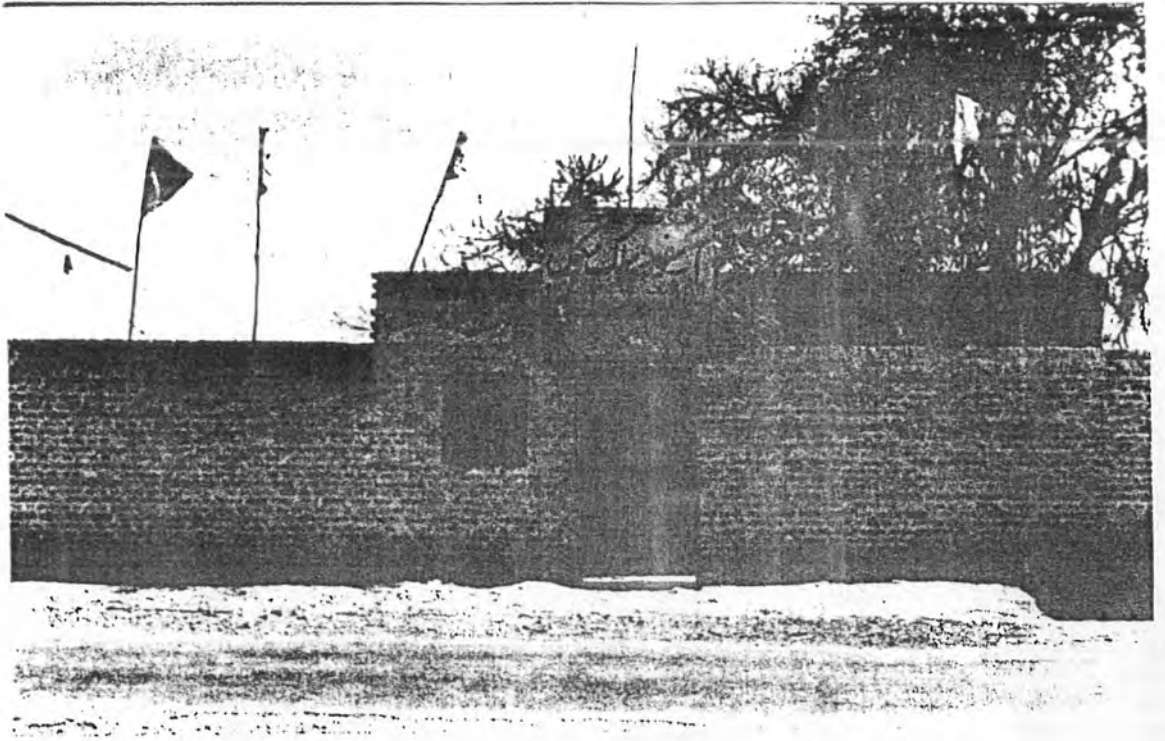
The village also have postal facility. But the village doesn't have any post office. The village Dak comes through post office of mauza Machianwala. The people have gone to Burewala city , where from they can post their letters.

2.4.5 Medical Facilities

The government of Pakistan also has provided medical facilities not only to the villagers but also to their cattle. In the village there are following health facilities are provided

- **village Dispansery**
- **Mother and child health care centre**
- **Population welfare officer**
- **Veterinary hospital**

All these medical centres for human beings and cattle have trained staff. The village Dispansery M.B.B.S doctor with a dispenser is allotted. But doctors do not stay more than few weeks here. In the mother and child health care centre, a L.H.V (female) with three T.B.A's are allotted. Their residences are inside the centre's building. The village also has population welfare centre which provide medical assistance and information about health and birth control. Free medicines are also provided by the health workers to the village females. But the villagers prefer to traditional medicines on allopathic medicines. They only go to medical



The village private English Medium School.



Madrisa - ul Binat

doctor when the case go beyond their hands. Infect this attitude is created due to absence of medical staff from these institutions. The provision of veterinary hospital is a great facility for villagers because cattle are extremely valuable for farmers. Some of the village families raise their livelihood by these cattle. So provision of a veterinary hospital infect raise the survival rate of cattle.

2.14.6 Education

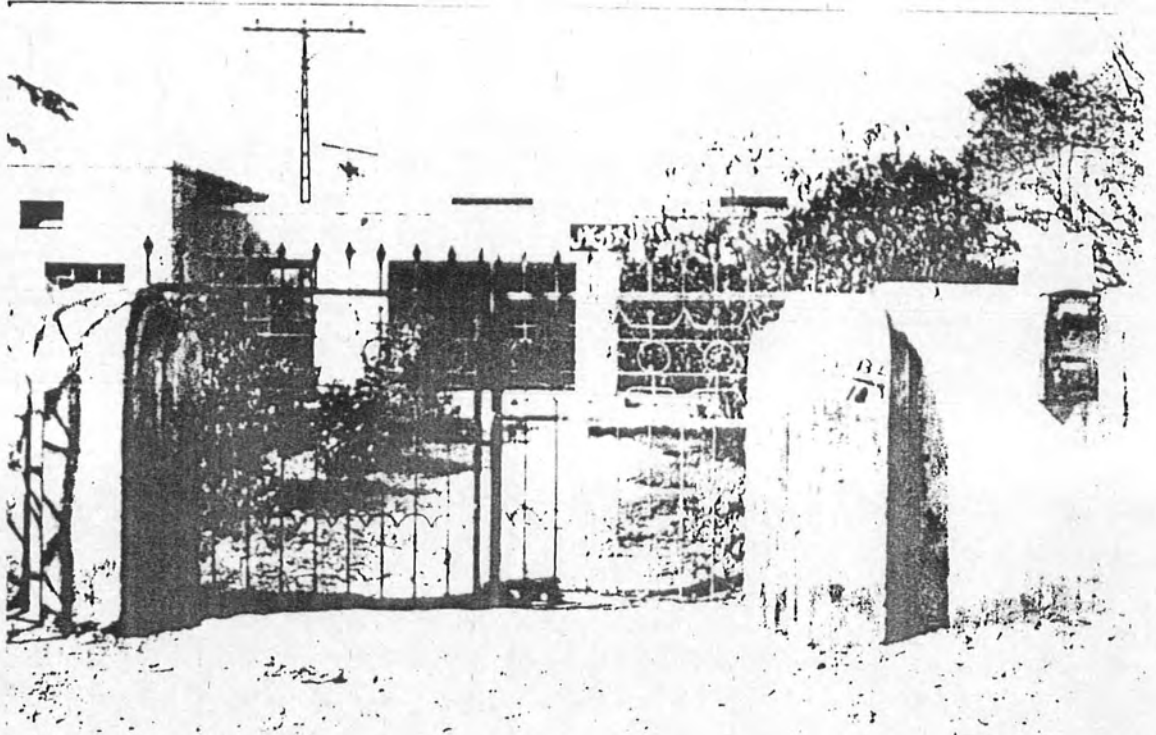
The government has provided educational facilities to the villagers. There are three schools in the village, two are govt. while one is private English medium school. One of these two govt. schools, one is high school for girls which last year has got the orders for secondary school, the other is primary school for boys. The village boys have to go to neighbouring village 'Fojian Walla' for higher school studies. For higher education boys are allowed to go out side the village while girls are not allowed. That is why in spite of higher school for girls village female's level of education is lower than men. This situation can be easily observed from Table No. 10

Table No. 10

Education Level Of Male And Female

| Level of Education | Male | Female | Total | % age |
|--------------------|------|--------|-------|--------|
| Illiterate | 110 | 181 | 291 | 39 % |
| 0 -4 | 73 | 53 | 126 | 17 % |
| 5 - 8 | 80 | 99 | 179 | 24 % |
| 9 -12 | 76 | 44 | 120 | 16 % |
| 13 - 14 | 13 | 9 | 22 | 3 % |
| 14 - Above | 2 | 0 | 0 | 10.3 % |

(Source:field data)



The village Union Council Office

Analysis of the table indicates that the number of educated male is larger than females. Hence the educational level of the male population is higher than that of females. The village also has a private English primary school. For religious teaching there is a Madrisa-tul-Binat, where young girls and boys learn Quran and some of them also Hifaz-e- Quran.

2.14.7 Transportation

Santy Phatak is well connected to the nearest town Machianwala and city Burewala, through a metalled road which was made in 1979. There is a regular Suzuki service provided for public use. From Burewala one can easily find buses, wagons and suzukis for the village which drop on the main bus stop, from where tonga drive only take five minute to take to the village *Santy Phatak*.

2.15 Political organisation

In the village, there is also Union Council office which supervise the village political activities. The Union Council look after 13 villages. In the village the *Panchayat* System Prevail. According to this system all the village affairs and conflicts are resolved locally. On any type of dispute the villagers get together and the problem is resolved.



A view of the village bus stop.



A view of the market at the bus stop.

2.16 Recreational Facilities

There is no proper recreational facilities enjoyed by the villagers except playing cards and gossips with each other. Any how, the young group arranged cricket and football matches between them under the youth cricket and foot ball clubs during winter season.

2.17 Conclusion

Now after having a complete geographical, historical, and socio-economic view of the researched locale, we would be able to have a comprehensive understanding of the problem which is a comparative study about nutritional status of pre-pubescent and pubescent females. This chapter is very important in the sense that one can't get proper understanding of any social problem without having a complete overview of the locale in which this problem prevail.

THE FOOD CONSUMPTION PATTERN

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the prevailing pattern of acquisition, preparation, consumption and distribution of food among the family members. The major factors which influence the consumption and distribution of food substances on the basis of the sex of the individuals also are to be discussed in this chapter.

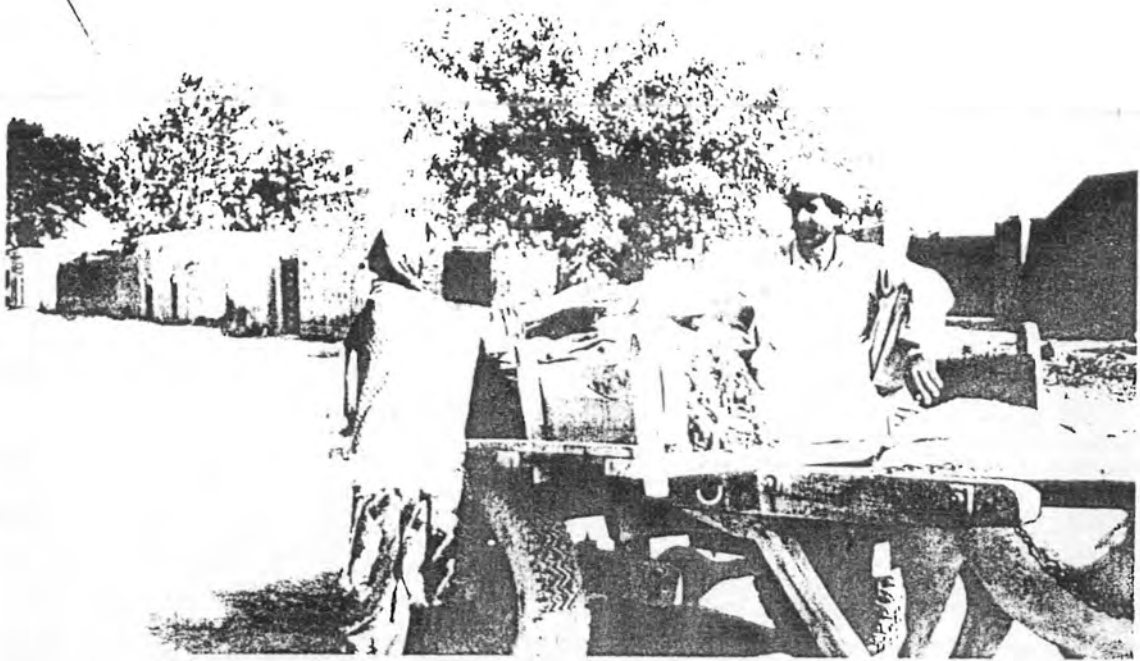
Food essentially is a bio-cultural concept, an organic product that plays many cultural roles other than providing nutrition. The literal definition of food is, "any substance eaten for survival," but what to be eaten must have cultural acceptance. Foster (1978) has defined food as a cultural concept, as a substance that is defined, as being suitable for nourishment. Helman (1984) has defined food in relation to social, religious and economic goals that it plays in the society.

The above definition is although explanatory and simple but it fails to explain the selection of any item by the people. In the context of my locale, the forces of availability and acceptability of the edibles by the people, lead to the selection of items as food or not. To put the native perceptions in the form of definition, the following picture emerges, "food is an interrelationship between the forces of availability, acceptability, norms, values and status of society members". This perception of food clearly indicates that there are different factors that effect the consumption of food.

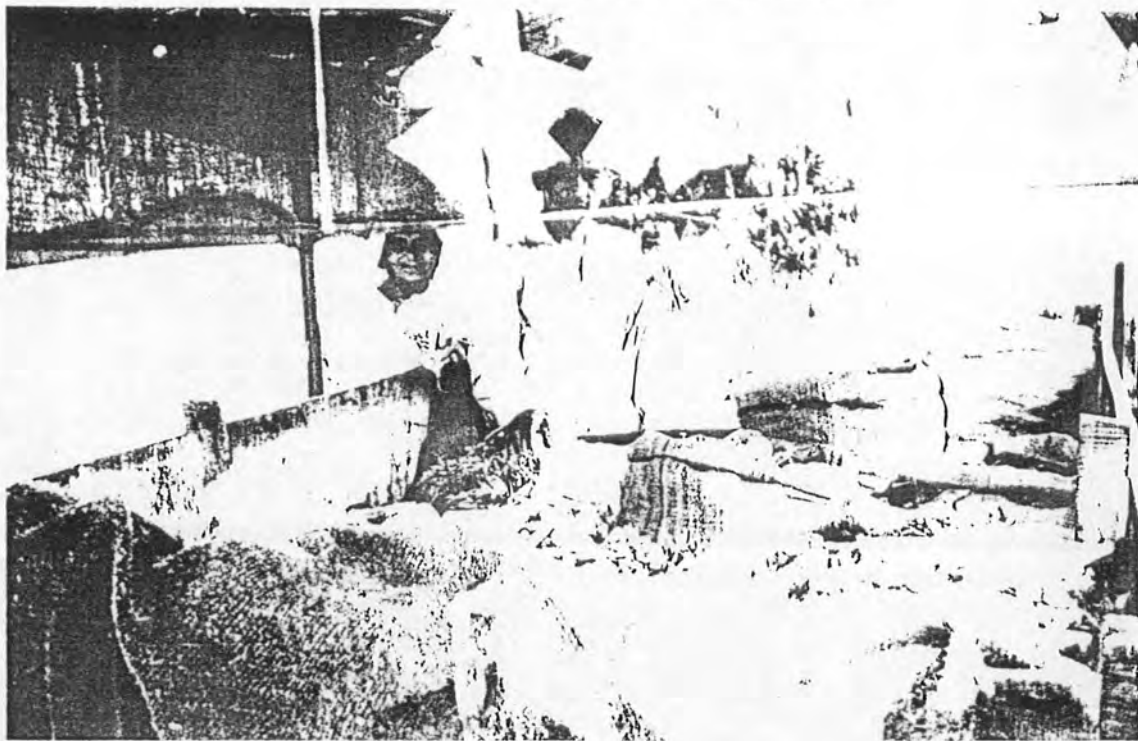
3.2 Acquisition Of Food Items

The most important factor is environment because it effects both the acquisition and consumption pattern of the food. As I have already mentioned that the climate of the village is severe. The major grown crops are wheat, rice, sugar-cane and cotton. The major staple food of the village people is wheat. Most of the village households grow wheat and rice on their own lands for yearly consumption. Those who do not have their own lands, they get these crops by "wadi" (helping farmer in harvesting) or at cost. It was observed that farmers prefer to grow crops rather than vegetables. That is why villagers have to buy vegetables from village *hutties*(shops) or *phery-wala*(hawkers) who bring vegetables on their heads, or by cycles or by donkey carts.

The results of questionnaire that were fulfilled by 48 pubescent females of 48 households of different socio-economic groups had mentioned that in 39 household's females decided about the dish that was to be cooked. Anyhow, It was also informed that on special occasions, males decided about the food dishes. Sometimes when males were desired to eat something special, they asked for it. The daily provision of edible items was also usually performed by females of the family. In the village, usually the duty of acquisition of food substances go to female family members.



The village hawker who bring edibles on donkey cart



An other hawker with his cart

FACTORS INFLUENCING DIET INTAKE AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS

FOOD AVAILABILITY

(Ecological Production, Selection
Distribution, Religious Taboos)



FAMILY PURCHASING POWER.

(Family Structure, Size Of Family
Number Of Earners, Income)



FAMILY FOOD PURCHASING POWER.

(Food Selection, Acceptability
Availability, poor Knowledge of Nutrition.)



WITHIN FAMILY FOOD DISTRIBUTION.

(Gender Privilege, Size Of Family)



Table No - 11

Who Buy Food Items

| | Member Of H/Hold | Number | Percentage |
|---|------------------|--------|------------|
| 1 | Mother | 8 | 17% |
| 2 | Wife | 15 | 31% |
| 3 | Husband's Mother | 14 | 29% |
| 4 | Husband | 8 | 17% |
| 5 | Son | 2 | 4% |
| 6 | Brother | 1 | 2% |

The analysis of table no-11 shows that in 37 families out of 48 families, female of the family buys food items from the village *Hutties* (shops) or from street hawkers. In second family whose males buy food items, is the one who do not have elderly females or who believe on strict *purdah*, that's why they don't allow their females to go out side the home. As a result, they provide every thing to them in the boundaries of the house.

3.3 Preparation of Food

The duty of preparing food was also performed by the household females. According to the results of questionnaires, in some families this duty was performed by mother while in others, it went to elderly daughter or the spouse of the son. The exact figures about those who usually cook food, is shown in the table no -12 .

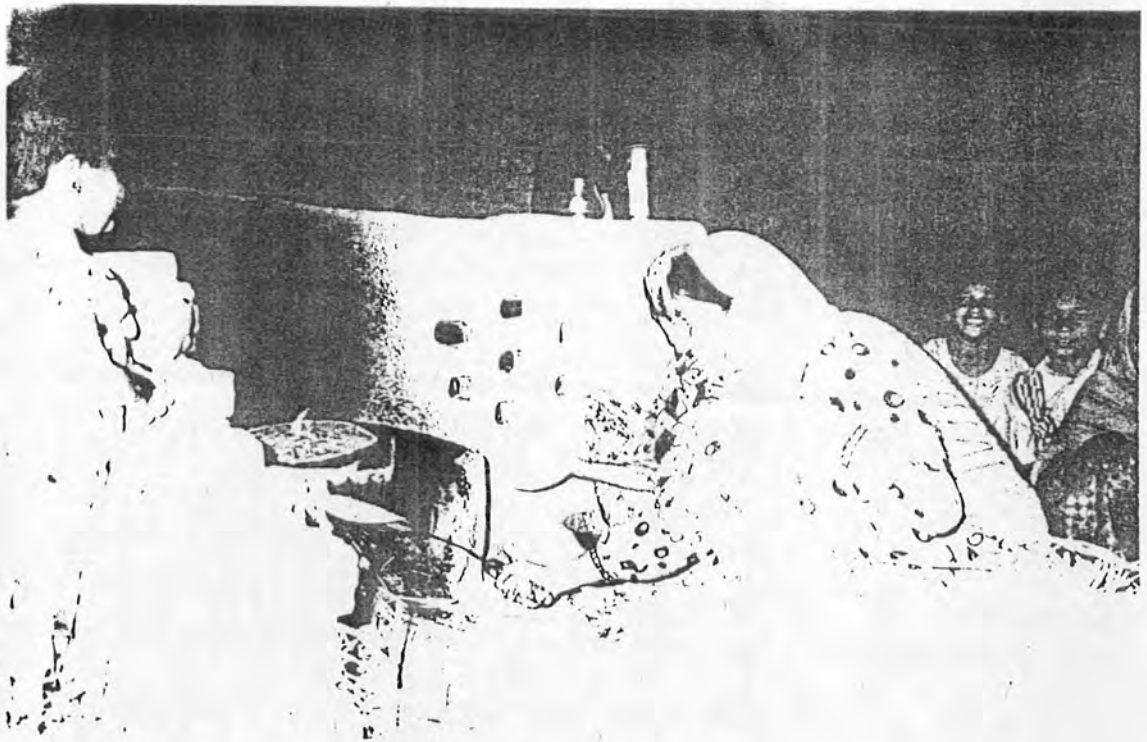
Table No -- 12

Who Cook The Food

| S.no | Status In H/ Hold | Number | Percentage |
|------|-------------------|--------|------------|
| 1 | Wife | 22 | 46% |
| 2 | Son's Wife | 9 | 19% |
| 3 | Daughter | 1 | 31% |
| 4 | Mother | 2 | 4% |



Females busy in preparing Food.



'Rotties' an important part of the village food are prepared on 'Tawi'

In 81 % households the food is cooked by the fire wood that is burnt in earthen made *chullah*(burner), “*Tavie*” and “*Tandor*.” In most of the village families, there was no concept of kitchen rather than there prevailed concept of *chullah*. A Corner in the room, or in the *baramda* or in the court yard, where *chullah* was fixed, became kitchen that was usually enclosed by two feet high wall. In some families who placed *chullaha* in court yard, they generally raised this wall five feet high, covered it with straw ceiling, to make it a kitchen. Some other burners that were stove of kerosene oil, electric heater and “*angithee*” (a mud hearth in which coal is burnt) were also used occasionally.

The firewood was believed to be best for cooking because it was not only economically suitable to them but also made food more tasty. On wood fire, cooking was observed most difficult. To start a fire was painful task. It required constant effort to maintain fire but women were willing to cook on wood fire for the sake of good taste. Because preparation of the tasty food that was liked by the men, was considered the success of women in their houses. In the village, cooking was taken as one of the factors that helps a woman to attain status in the household. To show their perfection in cooking, the women cook different dishes.

3.4 Consumption Of Food

The consumption of food substances vary according to seasonal variation, but the main components of the villagers diet are cereals especially wheat, pluses, vegetable, tea, *ghur*, sugar and dairy products,(lusu, milk, yogurt, butter etc.). Other non-cereals proteins like meat, fish and eggs did not find place in the diet of most families. The consumption pattern of daily



A farmer family busy in taking their lunch during the 'Kataie' of rice crop

meals varied in families of different socio-economic status. Mostly families took three meals a day. While only 7 % families took two meals, they skipped lunch.

Table No -- 13

Per Day Eaten Meals

| Number OfH / Hold | Number Of Meal | Percentage |
|-------------------|----------------|------------|
| 107 | 3 | 93 % |
| 8 | 2 | 7 % |

Locally break fast is termed as "*Nashita*" and the terminology used for lunch and dinner is same that is *Khana*.

3.4.1 *Nashita*

It is taken early in the morning before or soon after dawn. It consists of different items for people of various socio-economic categories.

1. Low Income Group: *Rotie* (chapati) along with tea or *Lussi*.
2. Average Income Group: *Chapati* or *Paratha*, tea or *lussi* and left over *dal*(curry) of yesterday.
3. High Income Group:- *Paratha*, milk , tea or *Lussi*, Butter, egg (especially for males).

3.4.2 Lunch (*Khana*)

The lunch timing starts from 12 a.m. In the village, usually most of the families prepare lunch with break fast. In different income groups, it consists of following different food substances:



An other key informant with her husband.

1. Low income group:

Chapatie, chilies, salt and onion.

2. Average income Group:

Chapatie (Rotie), *Dal*, curry or vegetable or beef curry, twice a week.

3. High income group:

Chapati (bread), *Dal*, curry or vegetable or beef curry and *Lussi*. Beef or mutton or chicken is used among this group two and three times a week. They consume butter and milk more than the other two groups.

3.4.3 Dinner (*Ricai Di Rotie*)

Its time begins soon after dusk. It is usually taken after *Mughrib* prayer. This *khana* consists of following food items among different income groups:

1. Low income group:

Chapati (Rotie), *Dal* or vegetable (*saag* or potato)

2. Average income group:

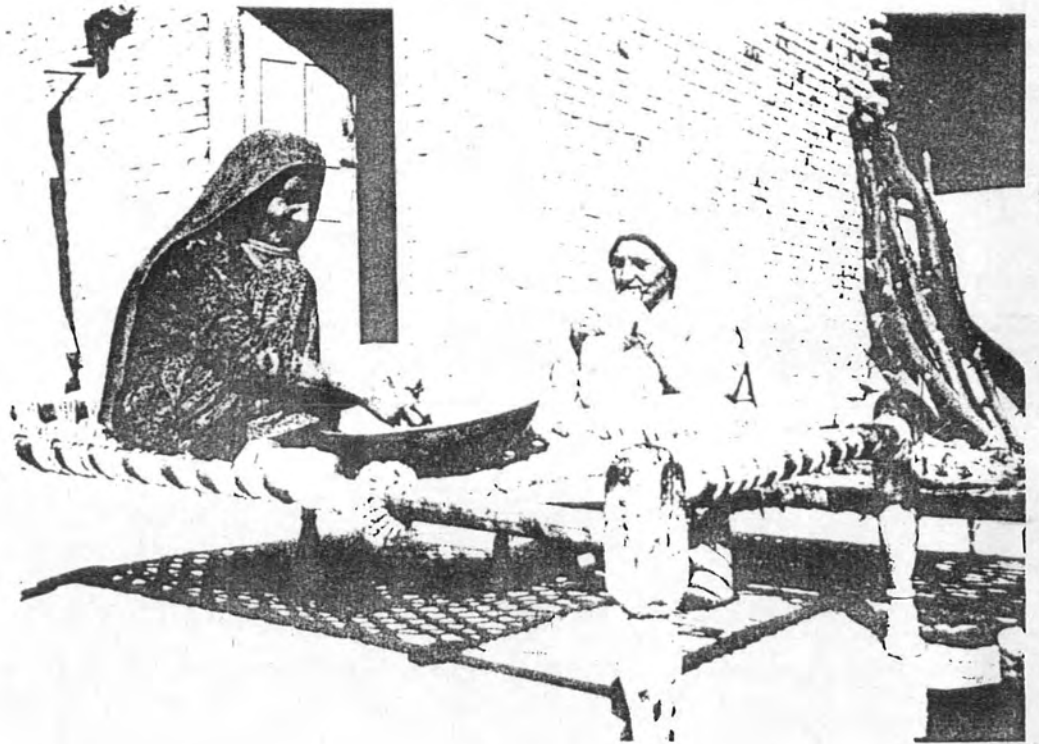
Chapati (Rotie), *Dal*, vegetable or beef curry.

3. High income group:

Chapati (Rotie), vegetable or *Dal* with butter or *Dessi ghee* or meat.

Dessert is normally uncommon but at special occasion people eat *Hulva* (*sooji + ghee + sugar*)

In this income group milk is used before going to bed, especially males regularly take it.



The guest is served with tea in winter season

By having careful view of all meals belonging to different income groups, we find that *Bread* (made up of wheat) is most important item of all meals. It is so important that all meat, vegetables and *dal* preparation rotate around it. In low income group even eating *bread* was considered having a complete meal. This important item of meal is usually prepared on "Tawi" or in "Tandoor(burner)," specially in summer. *Roties(bread)* are usually prepared on *tawi* or *tandoor* by women of one or different household. Usually, the women of two or three household get together and cook *chapaties(bread)*. One woman maintains fire and other cooks *roties(bread)*. Anyhow, in some families especially in higher income strata, *chapaties(bread)* are cooked by women of one house hold.

3.5 Distribution of Food

After the preparation of food, usually the person who cook food or any other elderly woman of the family distributes the food among the family members. In the table no-14 the person who distributes food in the 48 families are presented.

Table No - 14

The Person Who Distribute Food

| Number Of H/ Hold | Status Of Person In The Family | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| 17 | Mother | 35% |
| 9 | Wife | 19% |
| 10 | Daughter | 21% |
| 25 | Husband's Mother | 25 % |



A family taking their meal

The table shows that in 35 % families usually mother distributes the food, while in 25 % families husband's mother, 21 % families this duty is performed by elderly daughter and in 19 % house holds wife distributes the food items among the family members. It was observed that the person who distributed food had a higher status among female family members. She was the most authoritative and active woman among other females. The distribution of food among family member varies according to the importance and social status of the person in the family. The males of family are always given priority in food distribution. They are usually served 1st and if they are not at home on meal time, their portion is kept a side before serving to other members of the family. Usually the most loved ones get privilege in food distribution. The person who distributed food show her love and care for the privileged person through giving him/her preference in food distribution.

The food taking pattern in the village is, in most of the families, family members do not take their food together. According to the result of questionnaires, only three respondent has informed that they eat their meal together while 45 respondent has said that they eat their meal separately. There also prevail pattern of serving in the village which is tabulated in table no-15.

Table No-15

Who Gets Privilege In Serving Pattern

| Status Of Person | Number Of H/ Hold | Percentage |
|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Husband | 21 | 44 % |
| Father | 6 | 13 % |
| Husband's Father | 8 | 17 % |
| Husband's Mother | 4 | 8 % |
| Mother | 3 | 6 % |
| Son | 2 | 4 % |

(Source: Field data)

The analysis of table shows that only in 7 families out of 48 families, female are served 1st. The reason is not that in these 7 families female have higher status than males, but the case is that in these families either elder males have migrated abroad or have died. In short the result clearly shows, that the male preference in serving pattern of food.

The general serving pattern which prevails in the village is, if there is any guest in the house, he/she is always served 1st and then other member can take their meal. To serve food among the family member, adult men have priority over the women, and older women have priority over the other women, girls and children, while male children are served before girls. Among the males, the head of family is given maximum importance in distribution of food. He is given the best portion of "salan" (curry), with a lot of *ghee* on the top. Then food is served to other elderly males. Hot roties(breads) are constantly provided to them, usually more than requirement. So, that those eating have a feeling of sufficient food. While the women and children can have food side by side. Usually, the person who cook and distributes food eats in the end from the left over food substances. As we have already discussed that food is cooked and distributed by female family members, so we can say that they get the minimum level of food as compare to the other members of family. The distribution of food among family member has socio-cultural basis rather than physiological grounds.

3.6 Major Factors Which Influence Food Distribution.

The major noted factors which directly effect the distribution pattern among family members are as follows:

Prevailing concepts towards food

Prevailing gender beliefs about male and female

- (a) Physique
- (b) Ethnomedical notion about body
- (c) Growth rate
- (d) Social roles

3.6.1 Prevailing Concepts Toward Food

There are food prescriptions and proscriptions throughout the world which are defined in the name of religion or "Custom". Food taboos are meticulously observed in all societies and play an important role in the psyche of the people. Although societies develop food habits which permit the perpetuation of the race, there is little to suggest that man has an instinct for choosing food that provides proper and balanced nutrition.

Indeed, there is considerable evidence to the contrary. Vitamin deficiencies occur even where foods containing the needed vitamins are available but not eaten. It has been observed that cultural taboos and customs are generally strong enough to over-ride natural instincts. Food habits are transmitted from one generation to the next. Primitive societies, through trial and error, selected foods which are safe to eat and which could be depended on to alleviate hunger. As this information was dutifully transmitted to each new generation, it gradually incorporated fantasy along with truth giving rise to the taboos that are common to many societies.

Superstitions about food are presented in many cultures including Pakistani culture. Many nutrition studies of urban as well as rural communities in Pakistan has mentioned that the poor state of nutrition, especially among children and vulnerable group is due to the ignorance and a general lack of realization of the importance of food to health.

All the food items consumed in the community whether core foods or secondary foods items, are generally considered to have qualities attributed as hot (.....) and cold (.....) for example fish and eggs are considered “hot” and avoided during summer. Similarly, milk is cool and is avoided after taking fish or other hot foods. The notion of hot/cold is linked to health for the maintenance of which, a balance between the hot/cold elements of the body must be achieved. This hot/cold classifications further specify some edibles as avoided.

In the village, notion of hot/cold syndrome. They define certain foods according to heating and cooling effects which are perceived to produce in the body. From the two respondents who did not adhere this classification, one of them belonged to a very poor family, while the other belonged to a middle class educated family. But these two cases are exceptional, generally people classify all edibles.

3.6.1.1 Core Foods

This category includes edibles that are easily available usually the staple diet of the region. The core foods are used constantly and repetitively by the majority of the society members of any culture.

Table No- 16

Core Food Classification

| Core Food Items | Nature Of Food Items |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Milk (Cow, Buffalo) | <i>Badi</i> |
| Wheat | Hot |
| <i>Dalda Ghee</i> | Hot |
| Rice | Cold And <i>Badi</i> |
| <i>Dal Masoor</i> | Hot |
| Maize | Neutral |

Analysis of the above table shows that core foods are all those foods which are easily available and also acceptable to people. But, the natives in spite of acceptability, classify them into hot/cold dichotomy. And some times the people avoided to take the combination of these core foods e.g. the combination of rice and milk is highly avoided in the village. These core foods sometimes are also avoided by vulnerable group e.g. pregnant woman do not use *dal masoor*.

3.6.1.2 Secondary Foods

These are the foods which are infrequently consumed, depending on the economic well being of the consumer as well as on the functional value of food which it has for the consumer. Most of the seasonally grown crops also come in this category of secondary foods.

Table No - 17

Secondary Foods

| S. no | Secondary Items | Nature Of Food |
|-------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1 | Citrus Fruits | Cold |
| 2 | Beef | <i>Badi</i> |
| 3 | Eggs | Hot |
| 4 | Corn | Neutral |
| 5 | Bread | Neutral |
| 6 | Pickles | Hot |

The secondary foods are also termed as “*Khass*” foods by the villagers. The consumption of these food items is avoided on the basis of hot/cold classification. This category of food items is also avoided by vulnerable group e.g. taking eggs is taboo for pre-pubescent girls while beef is not used in *chillah*. Other than these core and secondary food classification, some other edibles are distinguished on the basis of hot/cold, *badi* as categorized by the informants can be seen from the following table-18.

Table No- 18

Classification Of Edibles As Hot/Cold

| S. no | Hot Food Items | Cold Food Items |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Mango | Water Melon |
| 2 | Melon | Plum |
| 3 | Apricot | Guava |
| 4 | Coconut | Banana |
| 5 | Dates | <i>Kino, Malta, Fruiter</i> |
| 6 | Dry Fruit | Carrot |
| 7 | Dry Dates | Radish |
| 8 | Honey | Cauliflower |
| 9 | Eggs | <i>Dal Mong</i> |
| 10 | Beef | Rice |
| 11 | Fish | Milk |
| 12 | Wheat | <i>Lassi</i> |
| 13 | Garlic, Onion | Juices |
| 14 | <i>Ghee, Gur</i> | Butter |
| 15 | <i>Dal Masoor</i> | |
| 16 | Tea | |
| 17 | Yogurt | |

Their opinions that when they adhere these food taboos, the 46 respondent when they adhere this hot /cold classification of food, are tabulated in Table No- 19 .

Table No-19

Consideration Of Hot/Cold Classification

| S No | No Of Respondent | Response | Percentage |
|------|------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | 13 | Always | 27 % |
| 2 | 33 | Sometimes | 69 % |
| 3 | 2 | Never | 4 % |
| | 48 | Total | 100 % |

The Analysis of the above table refers that most of the people consider this dichotomy sometimes, not always. It means that in the village temporary avoidance of hot/cold classification of food items prevails. Temporary food avoidance are those when individuals during certain periods with in the life cycle do not consume certain foods. Temporary food avoidance were observed to be generally related to vulnerable group such as women during pregnancy, after child birth and breast feeding and infants during the period of weaning etc.

In other words the practicality and application of this classification is more closely associated with the female reproductive cycle, as the women are said to be vulnerable in these "abnormal" physical states. It was observed that due to the hot/cold classification of food items villagers deprived themselves from easily and locally available low priced nutrient food items, for example tomatoes and eggs were easily available low priced food items which contain a lot of nutrition but usually female didn't use them as these items were considered extremely hot. This sort of avoidance when other nutrient sources are not available leads to malnutrition. And as we have already discussed that this food classification is more consciously observed by females

GENDER BELIEFS AND FOOD CONSUMPTION PATTERN

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter prevailing gender beliefs about physique, ethnomedical notion about body, growth rate and social roles of male and female are to be discussed. It would also be attempted to see, how it affects the food distribution among male and female member of family, also that how and why parents show different attitude towards new born.

The term "gender" has traditionally been used to designate psychological, social and cultural aspects of maleness and femaleness. The set of beliefs about purported qualities of masculinity and femininity is called gender beliefs. The prevailing gender beliefs about male and female are categorized in to four classes which are as follows;

Physical Image

Ethnomedical Notion About Body Nature

Growth Rate

Social Roles

The data that would be presented in this chapter is based upon qualitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (participant observation, informal discussions etc.) assessment.

4.2 Physical Image

The 73% respondents of questionnaires were of the opinion that physical image of male was: he should be tall, broad, well build and strong, the local terminology that were used to defined this stereotype, were *گھوڑے* and *شیر کی جوانی* (Lion's youth). While only 27% respondents were of the opinion that male should be normal and smart in physique.

It was observed that these women were those whose males were engaged in government services or were landlords. These males infect won't has to do manual labor. It was also found that literacy rate of these families was comparatively higher than other village families. Their exposure to modern life was also higher through electronic and written media. Totally opposite to responses of these females, I found that their males were comparatively healthier and fat than the other village males. The reason could be that they did not have to perform manual work. According to prevailing customs, they took better and nutrient meal like other males of the village.

After this discussion we can rightly comment that physical stereotype of male is that he should be well build, tall and strong. While physical stereotype of female is that she should be smart, tall, clear skin and sharp featured. The local proverb that is used to define this ideal image is *سُورِی، اچھلے، اور سُوکھ* (Fair, tall, and beautiful). The 100% respondent of the questionnaires totally agreed with this stereotype. They also had added some other attributes that would also be the part of female physical personality that, she should have long hairs, large eyes and pink lips etc.

In the village, it was observed that most of the unmarried females were smart but after marriage specially after the birth of children, women usually got fat. It was also found that they had tried their best to keep themselves according to the prevailing stereotype of female. For example they would not even use enough amount of water due to fear of fat abdomen. Often they failed to keep their abdomen fit but they consciously put efforts in order to get ideal physical image of women that clearly referred that they were aware about the physical image of female.

4.3 Ethnomedical Notion About Body Nature

The gender beliefs about body nature of male and female are that female body is hot in nature while male is cold. It is also believed that tendency of female's body hotness varies during different stages of life. The female lives go through different physical and reproductive changes, and different sorts of female food avoidance's are related to these physiological changes. These different stages of female life are as follows:

1. Pre-puberty
2. Menstruation
3. Pregnancy
4. Post partum
5. Lactation

4.3.1 Pre-Puberty

This stage includes the life span of female from birth till they reach to the age of menstruation. Due to hot climate of Multan region, the girls usually reach to this age about 11-13 years. This period is considered hottest of all stages. The local proverb uses to define this belief is اگر 13 سال کی لڑکی ہو تو اسے گرمی ہے جیسا کہ پھل کی پھل (Immature age is hot like unripe mango).

4.3.2 Menstruation

Usually girls reach to the age of puberty maximally at about 13th year of their age. From this stage female functionally get reproductive ability to bear young. Menstruation is monthly discharge of lining of the uterus. The discharge consists of blood, degenerated cell of the living mucus and some bacteria.

The menstrual flow normally lasts from four to six days with a variation of two to eight days. A period lasting more than eight days is abnormal. This period of menstrual discharge is locally believed as cold and *Badi*. It means that the people considered female body gets cold and *Badi* during menstrual period that occurred once a month.

4.3.3 Pregnancy

It begins with conception (the fertilization of an ovum by a sperm) and normally ends with child birth. This pregnancy period hangs on from 260--270 days. This period of women's life is

once again considered extremely hot. The logic given by the villagers, is that now in one body two persons take breath, so the hotness of female's body increase during pregnancy.

Table No-20

Hot/Cold Dichotomy As Applied To Physical State

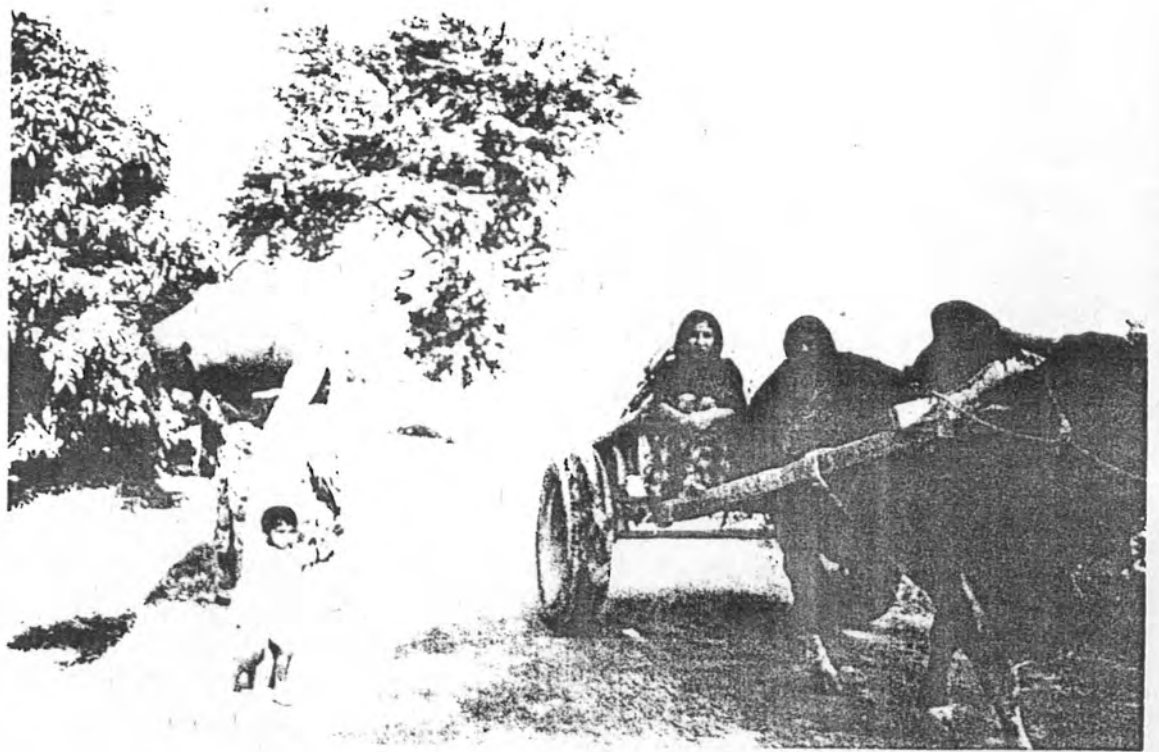
| Physical Status | Nature Of Body |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Pre-puberty | Very hot |
| Puberty | Hot |
| Menstruation | Cold |
| Pregnancy | Hot |
| Post - partum | Cold/ <i>Badi</i> |
| Lactation <i>lactation</i> | Neutral |

4.3.4 Post Partum Period

The stage comes after the birth of child includes hormonal changes in the body image, activation of unconscious, psychological conflict pertains into pregnancy and the intra psychic re-organization involved in becoming a mother. This period that is usually consisted of 40 days, the women feel illness in the first few days, is considered extremely cold.

4.3.5 Lactation

After giving birth to child, mothers feed their young ones. The period of breast feeding varies for different genders in families belonging to different socio-economic groups. Usually, this

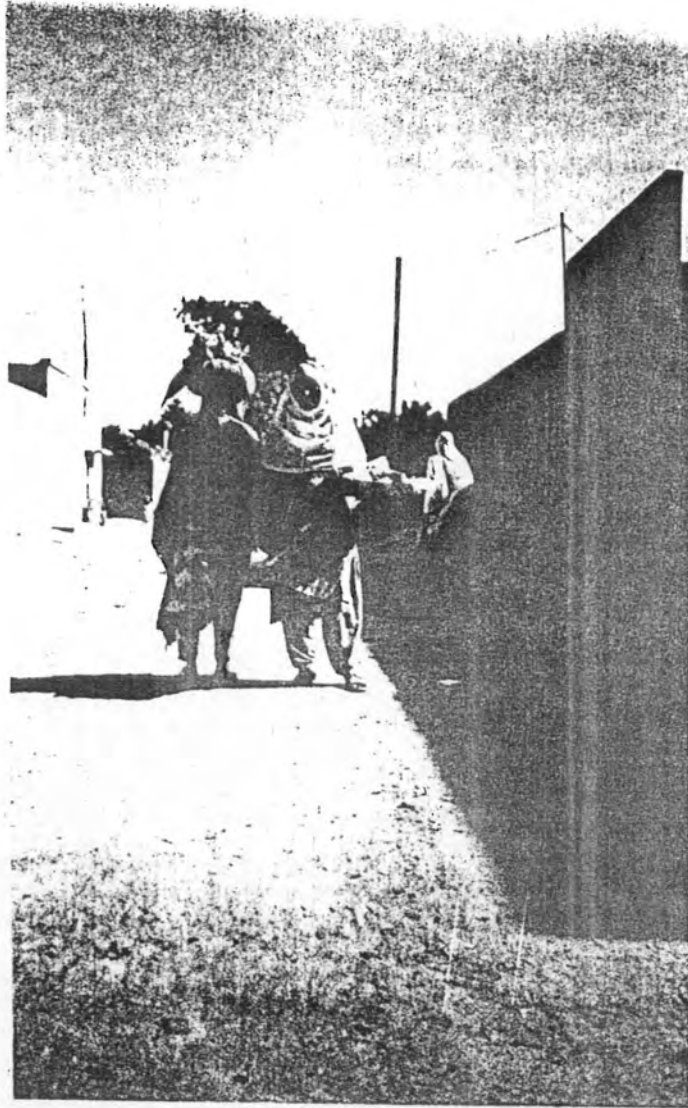


Some female go to their field by cart to fetch fodder.

The careful analysis of above table refers that 81% justification about giving male's a preferential treatment in dietary pattern, are based upon economical ground due to which males are provided with best possible nutrient and energetic meal from what ever is cooked in the family. Because they are productive members, they work hard so they need more diet. This justification strikes a question whether women do not perform hard work and produce any thing valuable?

It was observed in the locale that women performed harder work than the males. In the lower middle and lower economic groups women not only taken care of house hold works, but they also assisted male in agricultural works. They really had remarkable potential than men, as sometime was leisure time for males but there was no such time period for women. They got up early in the morning, perform all household works, served meal to family members and in the end took their meal from what was left over, also took care of cattle, then they went to field to help their husband, brothers and father. If they did not have to do any thing in the fields, returned home and did embroidery on shirts. Then they prepared lunch.

Male came and took their lunch. After lunch men taken some rest, but women usually cut fodder for cattle. Then performed all other cattle related duties. In the evening persons go out for some relaxation. The women usually got busy in preparing dinner. After dinner men gone to "chopal" or went to their beds but women washed all utensils, made beds and she even could not sleep if any child was sick. The reason due to which I have discussed all these daily activities is to show that women do perform harder duty then male. Then the question strikes to mind, why theirs (female's) works are not acknowledged? Usually, the reason is given that women do not do any thing of monetary value.



Female belonging to low income group on their way to work.

In this respect, I would like to give the example of lower and lower middle income groups. In these groups I found that in most of the families, women did work of monetary value while their male did not do any thing. Even in these houses males got preferential meal. In spite of the fact that the sons came after loitering about here and there and mother very well knew about his activities. Whenever he entered home, mother specially got up and served the food (left aside for him). So we cannot say that economic productivity of males has given them chance to get preferential meals. It is in fact the gender belief (stereotype) about male that he is economically productive member of family and society, that's why all males are considered economically productive.

In actual situation, the case can be different males do or do not perform this role, it's up to them but the gender beliefs remain same. So, we rightly comment that it is not productivity of male but it is the gender beliefs that give male preferential treatment in food distribution among family members.

An other careful view of table no --22, inferred that 2 % respondent have give preference to their male in food distribution. As on one hand they are productive members and on other hand, they are the family members that continue family name. So they are provided with higher quality and quantity of meal as their survival is essential for the continuation of family name.

One of my key respondent had commented that females were not permanent member of family. She had also added that she herself had left her parent's home and had become a member of her husband's family. Her daughter would also have to behave similarly because it is a social setup of our society that after marriage women have to leave their home and have to join her husband's family. Due to this cultural pattern male is considered the permanent

member of family who stay in the home and endured family name. That's a reason they got preferential treatment in food distribution because they were the members who would have to control the home in future. While again 6% respondents had justified this male preference with reference to religion. They had said that Islam had given male members an edge on female by the law of inheritance. They were of the opinion that they followed the Islamic law of inheritance in distribution of food. They gave double quality and quantity of food to the male than female.

Lastly 10 % respondents were of the opinion that they wanted to show care, love, and respect to the male that the reason they gave more to the family male. The question that strikes to mind is why women want to show love to male, the respondents have given the answer that women are nothing without their men

زناناں اپنے شوهر کے بغیر کچھ بھی نہیں ہیں۔

So, they gave preferential meal to their male to evolve good relationship with them. Because if they wanted to have higher status in family they have to establish good relationship with them as they (male) controlled all the family affairs. It was observed in the village, when old mother distributed food, she gave preference to her elder son. While when wife distributed preference went to either husband or father in law. When wife had good understanding with her husband, she gave preference to him, but when unfortunately she had not mutual understanding with her husband, then preference went to father in law or other males(in case of joint or extended family). When daughter performed the duty to distribute meal, privilege usually went to father. It was also observed that when food was served to father, in most of the cases mother asked to daughter "serve her father." In case when son had to serve, mother usually herself served him.

When the mothers had been asked, why did they give privilege to their sons. One of my key informant mentioned her **case study**. She got marry with a farmer. After marriage she started to live with her in laws. Her mother in law treated her brutally, always teased her, on her smaller amount of dowry. She was very disappointed from the situation as her husband did not ever favor her. Her mother consoled her that after birth of male child every thing would be all right. But unfortunately she got a female child. Her mother in law became more angry, and started to pump her husband to remarry. Her life became extremely miserable, all the time she worked, no one took care of her, even her husband became indifferent from her. In these frustrated days, she got pregnant again. She felt some relief as now her mother in law, did not insist for tough jobs. She was very up set mentally, as she knew that she must have a son if she wanted to continue this marriage. She prayed a lot for a son. At last finally by the grace of God, she had a son. After the birth of son, she felt a great change in the behavior of all her in laws. Her husband who never had touched his daughter, now took the son out side and became careful to her. Now after son's birth whenever there was any quarrel between her and her mother in law, her husband came to favor her.

In short birth of son not only risen her status in the family but also strengthen husband wife relationship that would be near to break if the new born would be a daughter. She has said that why wont be she willing of the survival of the son who has saved her from future disrespect that would she have to face in case of separation. That's why she has given privilege to her son. Also after marriage daughters go to their husband's home, then she would have to stay with her son. Who would only give higher status to her than his wife, when she has a nice loving relationship with him. Other wise her wife wont let her to stay in his house.

Another case was observed in which father in law was given preference in food distribution. The woman was asked that why she had not given privilege to her husband. The given answer was that she had not a good relationship with her husband. She was only in the house due to her father in law. As all the property was on his name and he had threaten her husband, if he had done any thing wrong with her, he won't give him a penny. So, whenever there was a quarrel her father in law resolved it that was a reason, she had taken more care of her father in law in food then her husband.

These above mentioned case studies have revealed that through giving privilege in distribution of food, women establish good relationship with males. Through this good relation they attain higher status in the family.

THE DIETARY PATTERN OF FEMALE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the food consumption pattern of village females. In the previous chapter we have discussed the affects of gender beliefs on the food consumption and distribution pattern of all family members. In this chapter, the diet of females would be specially focused and it would also be tried to sort out the kind of relationship between prevailing gender beliefs and female's dietary intakes during different stages of their life. The females are categorised into different groups according to their physiological stages and conditions which are as follows:

- 1-Pre-Pubescent Females
- 2-Pubescent Females
- Marriageable Females
- Married Females
- Pregnant Females
- Women in Post Partum Period
- Lactating Women

The diet of women during these stages would be discussed according to the prevailing gender beliefs about female physique, body nature, growth rate and social roles.

5.2 Dietary Pattern Of Pre-Pubescent Female

The group of pre-pubescent includes the girl children from their birth day until they reach to the age of reproduction. We would see the dietary pattern of infant girls with reference to the prevailing traditions about the birth ceremony, breast feeding and weaning patterns. In the studied village, the male preference traditions are observed from the day, the new born takes birth. It is also noted that parents discriminate against their own child (daughter), on the basis of biological factor, as being female is less than a human being.

The quite different behaviours are observed on the birth of male and female child in the village. The birth of a boy is considered a good omen. The family members show their happiness by congratulating each other. Soon the village *kummies* arrive to give "mubarakan"(congratulations) to the family. The village "nian" hangs "seharu" (made up of *sharien* leaves) at the front door of the house. Sweets and *lukklos* are distributed among relatives, neighbours and friends to celebrate the occasion.

After seven days the religious customs of "Aqiqa" and "khatma" are usually performed. On this occasion, feasts are held in which all the relatives are invited to share the happiness of boy's birth. Usually on this celebration "*khusras*(traditional dancers)" also arrive; they beat drums, sing songs and present dances. In short the birth of son is considered happiest occasion other than male's marriage in the family.

Extremely contrast to above mentioned attitude, the birth of girl is considered, an occasion of disappointment. When in some family female child takes birth, the occasion is usually heralded by scilence. No ceremony takes place at the birth of a girl. In fact, the birth of female is totally ignored. There is quietness, sadness and disappointment surrounding the birth of a girl. In some cases, it was observed that older females of the family even wept on this occasion.

Hence the differential treatment has started since birth. Also baby boy gets preferential treatment in dietary intake than that of the girl child "*Ghuttie*", which is traditionally considered first intake of the new born, is specially given to the male child. The *ghuttie* given to a male child, usually consist of best possible available items e.g. honey, *Humdard ghuttie*, sugar gripe-water etc. While no special importance is given to provide this first intake to girl child. Sometimes they aren't given *ghuttie* and if are given, it usually consists of sugar, *ghur* etc. Not only the new born are given different treatment on the basis of the sex that they have, but also her/his mother experience different dietary treatment. The quality and quantity of food were differentiated according to the sex of the child, she was given birth. The mothers of baby boy received special diet by her husband and mother in-law, so that the boy would get more nutrient milk that raised his life expectancy. In the case of ill health boys were also given expensive treatment than girls.

In the village *Santy Phatak*, breast feeding is practiced by almost hundred percent of mothers that seem to be an encouraging sign. Anyhow, the duration of nursing child varies with the sex of a child. But Quranic order of feeding child is, "mothers should suckle their children for two whole years"(Al-Quran: 2, 233).

As far as feeding age limitation is concerned the respondents have given different responses. Only the two respondent out of 48 respondents of questionnaires were of the opinion that there wasn't any difference in the feeding duration of male and female child. While 46 respondent were of the opinion that they observed different period of nursing male and female child.

Table No - 23
Duration Of Breast Feeding

| S. No | Sex | Duration | Number | Percentage |
|-------|--------|------------|--------|------------|
| 1 | Male | 2 years | 41 | 85% |
| | Female | 2.5 years | | |
| 2 | Male | 21 month | 1 | 2% |
| | Female | 2 year | | |
| 3 | Male | 2 years | 4 | 8% |
| | Female | 2.25 years | | |
| 4 | Male | 2 years | 2 | 5% |
| | Female | 2 years | | |

(Source: Field data)

The analysis of table induces the information that in 95% cases female children are given preferences in feeding duration. Fairly looking at these results, we find that in this sphere parent did not discriminate their girl children. Because they breast fed their daughters for longer period than the male children. The given reasons of girl child preferences in feeding tradition are tabulated in table no-24.



A lactating woman is feeding her child during her field activities

Table No -- 24

Reasons Given for Female Preference in Feeding Customs

| S. No | Reasons | Number Of Respondent | Percentage |
|-------|------------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| 1 | To show more love | 81 | 19% |
| 2 | To show care for transitory member | 31 | 67% |
| 3 | Islamic reason | 6 | 5% |

The 19 % respondent has said that they have given preferences to their daughters in breast feeding as they love them more because they have more rights on parents

..... دہائیوں میں لڑکیوں کو زیادہ حق دیا گیا ہے

While 67 % respondent had added into first response and inferred that they had given privilege to girls as they were not permanent members of family, one day they would have to leave and live with their husband's family. As they were for shorter time period with parents that's why they should be given preference in this custom. The local proverb used to elaborate this situation is

دہائیوں میں لڑکیوں کو زیادہ حق دیا گیا ہے

The 3rd category of respondent had believed that female preference in breast feeding was according to the prescription of Islam. If we rely on the verbal expression of respondent it suggests higher survival rate of infant girls. Because according to Khan and Baker (1979), natural feeding is best available food for human babies, breast feeding is the traditional and ideal form of infant nutrition, usually it is capable to meet the child's nutritional needs. It is economical, hygienic, readily available, high in protein, that it is easy to digest for child's stomach. It plays an important role in combating infections, through building up the immunities in the child. In the Encyclopaedia of child care and guidance (1954), same point of view is represented, "breast milk is healthful, it meets most of the metabolic needs of baby, it contributes to good growth, it is clean, lowering the risk of intestinal illness and general infections, further more it provides a host of protective factors. Breast fed babies are more resistant to malaria and to infection".

By considering this positive point of view about breast feeding, we get the expression of higher survival rate of girls. Contrarily the data we have gathered from socio-economic survey presented very different situation. According to it, the mortality rate of female infant is 69%. If we analyse the situation with reference to Marx's theory of Historical materialism, it could be rightly commented that the people have said that they fed their daughters for longer period due to affection. In-fact the reason is that females are not taken economically valuable (economic dependence & custom of dowry). So people do feed them through breast for longer period. According to medical science, breasts feeding don't remain any more nutritious for children as they cross their 6 months of age. They hang on this feeding till 2 years to 2.5 years. Because if they stop breasts feeding, they have to provide some other nutritious alternative to them, which surely cost expenditure. As women aren't taken as productive member that is a reason people do not want to stop breast feeding of girl child in early age.

On the other hand male child is breast fed for shorter period, as he is considered future productive person. The reason is that the people are willing to pay for him, as it is considered investment. This point is again analysed by Marx that economical sphere controls all other spheres of life. In the end we can comment that the under lying reason of feeding a girl child for longer period is infect undesirability and transient membership of the female rather than a matter of love.

5.2.1 Artificial Feeding Or Bottle Feeding

Artificial feeding means feeding the babies with other than breast milk. Among the women in the studied village artificial feeding is also practised along with breast feeding after stopping breast feeding. Usually it is observed that male child is given feeder after breast feed. In case, if girl child is given feeder the quality of milk varies from that of given to male child. The boys are usually given powder milk or buffalo milk boiled with "sonf," so that it won't cause gastric pain to him. While no special care is taken for girl's feeding milk, they aren't be even given pure milk. The duration of giving feeder to male and female children also varies, male's time gape between two feeds is shorter than that of female. As it is believed that male need more diet for healthier growth.

5.2.2 Weaning Pattern And Girl Child

According to Khan and Baker (1979), the word "wean" means "to become accustomed too". Traditionally the weaning period is the time when the child becomes less dependent on milk. It is the stage when after or along breast feeding other foods are introduced. Most of the health experts agree that the best time to introduce weaning is about four to six months of age. This is the time when breast feeding become inadequate to meet the child's nutritional needs.

The weaning period usually extends from the time of the introduction of 1st solid or semi-solid food till the completion of breast feeding period. As we have already discussed that male children are usually breast fed for shorter time period. As they are more desired person of the family that is why male child's weaning starts comparatively at early age than girl. The mother or grand mother or someone else in the family, starts giving banana, yoghurt, butter etc. to male infant. If the child don't eat willingly, he is given these food items by force.

A grand mother is always there, wishes to give butter, *ghee*, yoghurt etc. to male children for their growth. As family members have more time for taking care of male child. While on the other hand females are totally neglected. No body have time to feed her some thing because she is neither considered permanent nor desired member of the family. So, no one took care of introducing new and solid foods to her.

In-fact escaping from this tension of providing her something to eat, mothers breast feed them for longer period. It is already mentioned that after 6 month breast feeding wouldn't remain enough for nutritional needs of child and also weaning start late in the case of a girl. Which counts a lot in the bad nutritional status of female and causes anaemia that ultimately leads to the higher rate of infant mortality. It was observed on various occasions in the village that during weaning period baby boy is given many specially cooked soft and cereal type of foods which were given to him with love and some times by force when he refused to take them. But no such preparation of food for girl child was observed. The girls were usually observed to suck a piece of *chapatie* or a bone with out any meat.

Some people induced that lack of education was a major factor of girl children's poor nutritional state due to which infant girl's mortality rate is high. The under lying reason of this situation is in fact undesirability of girls. In other words, mothers are willing to provide time and attention toward a future productive member that also raises their status in the family. Contrarily they neglect girl child because to them, rising a girl is not a profitable business. That is why they let the life and health of girl child on God and try to provide her only marginal food and medical facilities. If she survives in-spite of all carelessness, it is her fate. A proverb which is frequently used in village is

ہر کچھ کھا کر بچ جائے تو اس کا کچھ نہیں ہے

means that in-spite of all sort of negligence if they survive, its credit don't go to their fate and higher survival potential.

5.2.3 Diet Of Girls

These are the females who are not still reached to the age of reproduction. As they do not still have get menstrual periods that's why their social mobility is not restricted. They don't observe *purdha*. As still they are not considered threat to the honour of the family but usually *dopatta* (scarf) is a part of their dress. In the village we can observe them in village streets; playing & buying things from village *hutties* or hawkers. Usually in food serving there number comes after serving all male and elderly women.

As these girls are socially mobilised, so they eat many things in the field e.g. sugar cane, vegetables, unripe mango fruits etc. These girls are the females who any how get from left over meal but they eats a lot. The reasons could be that these girls are too young, they aren't conscious about smartness. And if they do know they don't take it as a problems. So they go on eating with out having fear of fatness. In fact they eat every thing available. It's true that there are a lot of taboos on their diet. As they do not have self consciousness it's a reason that they go on eating thing without letting other people know. As it is strongly believed that pre-puberty time period of female life is very hot so hot foods are considered taboo for young girls. Mothers and grand mothers strictly with held all hot foods like egg, fish, coconut, unripe mango, tomatoes, and dry fruits etc. from them due to the fear of early menstruation. The

respondents of the questionnaires have given different views about food items which should not be eaten by pre-pubescent females, these views are tabulated in Table No.25

Table No 25
Food Taboos For Pre-Pubescent Females

| S. No | Food Items | No Of Respondent | Percentage |
|-------|--|------------------|------------|
| 1 | eggs ,meat, fish, dry fruits ,unripe mangoes | 16 | 33% |
| 2 | Dry fruits unripe mango | 3 | 6% |
| 3 | Fish, dates | 1 | 2% |
| 4 | eggs fish Dry fruits unripe mangoes | 9 | 19% |
| 5 | eggs ,unripe mangoes | 12 | 25% |
| 6 | egg, fish unripe mangoes | 4 | 8% |

The analysis of table has made it clear that 100 % respondent are of the opinion that young girls wouldn't allow to eat hot foods. Any how they have given their own preferences to different food items according to their perception which foods are hotter than others.

According to the medical definition, these hot foods are the food items, that's smaller amount provides greater amount of calories. By keeping these food items away from their daughters, the most of the mothers wouldn't allow them to use those nutrient items which are used by other members of family. But it does not mean that the girls wouldn't use these items, as it is not possible that some thing is in the home and children don't use it. In some cases it is observed that girls do use these food items but try to conceal their utilisation.

Here I would like to mention a **case study**. The eldest daughter of a lower middle class farmer's family has reached to the age of puberty at only 11 years of age. According to the mother, it was due to the utilisation of hot foods. She informed that she had taken a lot of care that her daughters might not use hot foods. She never allowed them to eat eggs. Because her

family was poor which couldn't bear the burden of a pubescent daughter. But all her efforts had remained in vain. As in spite of all care, her daughter reached to age of puberty soon before her expected age. She had said that in last summer, her mother had gifted her unripe mangoes to make pickle. Unfortunately, she felt ill and her daughter got the chance. She ate up all these unripe mangoes. And when she came to know about, nothing could be done. Anyhow she did not forget to beat her. She also added, now all her cousins who are of her age group, they are enjoying the liberties of pre-puberty period.

TABLE No 26
Food Avoidance in Specific Physical States

| Puberty Taboo food item | Nature of food items | Period taboo food item | Nature of food items | Pregnancy taboo items | Nature of food items | Post-partum taboo items | Nature of food items |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Eggs | Hot | Juices | Cold | Honey | Hot | Rice | Cold |
| Honey | Hot | Yoghurt | Cold | Beef | Hot | Sugarcane Juice | Cold |
| Beef | Hot | <i>Lassi</i> | Cold | Fish | Hot | Yoghurt | Cold |
| Pickle | Hot | Banana | | Salt | Hot | Pickle | Hot |
| Mango | Hot | Melon | Cold | <i>Kerala</i> | Hot | Juices | Cold |
| Un-ripe mango | Hot | | | <i>Dal masoor</i> | Hot | <i>Lassi</i> | Cold |

Her daughter started observing *purdha*, her father wouldn't allow her to go out side. In the answer of one question, one of my key informant had informed that people were afraid of early puberty of girls. Because since then they were not too old to understand the pattern of society. If they reached to the stage of productivity in their early age they were not enough sensible to take care of themselves. And the village situation was such that in this case there were greater chances of abduction and sexual abuse. She also had mentioned one case in which one family took revenge from their enemies by abducting their daughter.

She also informed that as it was considered more easy to tripe a young innocent pubescent girl, that's why people were afraid of girl's early puberty. And for this purpose they try to with held all sort of nutrient items from the girls, so that there pre-puberty period could be prolonged. In this effort many nutrient food items which are in-fact essential for their brought up, kept away from them. So almost 78% of pre-pubescent girls reach to the age of puberty with poor nutritional status.

5.3 Diet Of Pubescent Females

The group of pubescent females include the women who have reproductive quality. After puberty women are restricted in their homes. It is observed that girls started observing *purdha* after reaching to the age of menstrual period. Because girl's honour and therefore her family and communities honour can be tainted even by becoming a victim of rape (and some rapes are committed solely as revenge by male relatives). So after getting pubescent, usually girls are not allowed to mobile with out *purdha*. It is observed that the hot food taboo which is strictly prohibited in pre-puberty period, to some extent becomes relaxed after puberty. The logic is given that

در زمان بلوغ و پس از آن، دختران به رعایت *purdha* می‌پردازند و به دلیل این محدودیت، دسترسی به غذاهای گرم و مغذی برای آنها محدود می‌گردد. این امر می‌تواند منجر به سوءتغذی و تأخیر در بلوغ شود.

The menstrual periods that come once a month and hang on for 6-7 days. It is believed that in this period female body become cold and *badi*. So all things that are cold in actual temperature or by effects, are prohibited e.g. milk, *lassi*, cold water, oranges etc. The reasons given were that during menses circulation of blood is increased which keeps the body warm while the utilisation of cold foods unbalanced the body temperature. Which may lead to excessive bleeding or other complication in the menstrual cycle, that is a reason during these days hot foods e.g. hot milk, tea, *Ajwain* etc. are used. It's a truth that during menstrual period, hot foods are used and cold foods are avoided. Anyhow it does not mean that hot food avoidance totally disappears for unmarried pubescent females. In normal life hot foods are still avoided by unmarried pubescent females. It in fact exists, until they get married. To explain the logic of avoiding hot food is

در دوران قاعدگی، بدن زنان سرد می‌شود و به همین دلیل، مصرف غذاهای سرد مانند شیر، آب سرد و میوه‌های سرد ممنوع می‌گردد. به جای آن، غذاهای گرم مانند چای، شیر گرم و ادویه‌ها استفاده می‌شود تا بدن را گرم نگه دارد.

مرد کی عفتی ساری ہے مگر داند گونج آجاتا ہے

Means that if a man commit something sinful, it's all right, but if something is happened wrong by a woman, it becomes shameful for the whole family. In act it is a gender belief that disseminate specific sexual attitude of male and female. According to the gender beliefs, females should have submissive sexual attitude, and should not show any desire to sex.

Sex is considered an expression of manliness while such action and attitude are unthinkable for girls (female). So, women are not allowed to utilise hot foods freely. Because it is believed that these food increase hormonal growth and as a result, raise desires to sex. For men's utilisation of hot food is all right but for women, it becomes a taboo, as the results, there consumption are unthinkable for them. This fear is found so strong in the people that they wouldn't let the females to take enough nutrition that is even essential for their healthier survival.

It was also observed that the marriageable females and the females in post *partum* period, were more conscious about the ideal physique of female. It was noted that an ideal image of a female physique (presented by gender belief) and dietary choices of marriageable females and the females who are in post *partum*, were closely interrelated. These females are most considerate to avoid the foods that affect their ideal image of beauty and physique. It was found that marriageable females avoided foods e.g. tea, egg, dry fruits, butter, *ghee* due to the fear of *achnic* and fatness. To keep themselves safe from *achnic*, they use cold food items like *lassi*, milk, *Rao*(sugarcane juice) etc. Which are considered useful to keep their skin clear, fair, and free of *achnie*. The 72% of respondent who belonged to upper and middle classes observed *purdha*.

They informed that sometimes they didn't eat more nutrient foods like butter, rice, *ghee* etc. so that they wouldn't gain weight. One of my marriageable respondent had informed that now-a-days, the first demand by most of the bridegrooms was that their bride should be smart (does not mean lean). So in attempt to have a good match, the girls have tried to keep themselves fit and smart according to an ideal image of female physique. When they were asked about main attributes of ideal image of female physique. The 100% respondent agreed that a physically

ideal woman should be smart, tall, cleared skin, have pink lips, and sharp features etc. The responses that are given about an ideal male are tabulated in table- 26.

Table No-26
Physical Image Of Ideal Male

| Responses | No of Responses | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| healthy and powerful tall and broad | 93 | 90% |
| Smart short lean and bony | 7 | 10% |
| total | 100 | 100% |

Here I have presented the responses of respondents about the ideal physique of male and female so that it would be possible to see the difference between the ideal image about physique of both sexes. The above table implies that only 10% respondents were of the view that male should be smart while 100% respondents were of the opinion that women should be smart. It is the reason, due to which marriageable girls, are forced to control their diet in order to keep themselves slim. In this effort, they aren't allowed her postures to be strong, that is essential for conceiving a healthier child, as they don't take enough nutritional substances. As on one hand, our social customs only allow them to eat in the end from the left over food and secondly, they themselves cut down their meal to keep themselves according to the female physical stereotype .

It is also noted that during *chillah* period, women don't use even enough amount of water and "Rottie", having fear that it's use would increase her abdomen size. In-spite of the fact that they need more diet and nutrition for recovery, they don't even take these basic available food items . All these factors lead the women to be anaemic.

5.3.1 Diet Of Female During Pregnancy Period

Pregnancy is the period when a woman has to keep her health. She should eat every thing. In the village 71% respondents of questionnaires were of the opinion that women should not increase their diet during these days. Because greater amount of diet raises the size of the baby and as a result size of the abdomen. After delivery it wouldn't be possible to stretch down the



A pregnant woman busy in making butter and Lussi through traditional method.

abdomen. It was also believed by village women that during this stage female body becomes again very hot like unripe mango that is hotter than ripen one. That's a reason during this period women should not eat hot foods e.g. eggs, *dal masoor*, fish, etc. As it was believed that the consumption of these foods led to miscarriage. According to one of my respondents who was pregnant, she did not use *dal masoor* and eggs because their 'peer' (religious leader) had prohibited her. She told that in fact these items were hot and could lead to miscarriage.

As it was found that the pregnant women who needed more nutrition, were prohibited to use those nutrient food items that were used by other family members and even they also used them when they were not pregnant. The prohibition of these food items was based upon gender beliefs because it had disseminated the idea that during pregnancy women body becomes hot. In the field I had met most of the pregnant women who had anaemia and iron deficiency. Such mothers who themselves had iron deficiency, what they could give to new generation?

5.3.2 Diet Of Female During Post Partum Period

Post partum period starts soon after delivery till 40 days. In this period female body nature once again changes into cold and *Badi*. The local term use to define the body nature is.....(*Kutcha Gissa*). In this period totally contrary to pregnancy period, cold food substances become a taboo for female. These foods are *lassi*, *Rao* (sugar cane juice), carrot, water melon, kino, citrus juices etc. In-stead of cold foods, the foods which are *chillah* (post partum period), they would get joint pains. Body gets swollen and abdomen size also increases. It was also found that the diet of female in *chillah* period was also effected the sex of new born child. Not only the child but also her/his mother experienced different behaviours according to the sex, he/she had.

As the birth of a boy is considered a good omen for the family, so the birth of a male child raises his mother's status which is expressed through the special and nutrient food items provided to her. About 36% respondents informed that sex of a child effects the amount and quality of mother's diet. One of my respondent who has given birth to 6 children, 3 boys and 3 girls. She informed that on the birth of a boy, she received special treatment from her mother-



The village LHV with a patient

in-law and husband by the provision of special foods like *pinjeeri*, eggs, milk and 8 -10 kilo *desi ghee*. She also informed that on the birth of girl child, she not only experienced negative behaviour of her husband and mother in law but no preferential food was given to her. Even the usage of *desi ghee* which was considered essential for recovery, wasn't provided to her. If she got it, its amount was less than that of provided on male child's birth. The amount of provided *Desi-Ghee* on the birth of a female is 3-4 kilogrammes.

5.3.3 Diet Of Female During Lactation

In the village, breast feeding was practised by almost 100 percent of mothers that seemed to be an encouraging sign. However, the health of mothers affected child's health, should be taken into consideration. In the village mother's health was not good. The quality and quantity of food that the diet mothers take, affect the quality of breast milk. In this respect when the village respondents were asked, should women increase their diet during lactation? Only 41% respondents who were mothers, informed that they had increased their diet during lactation period while 59% said that they didn't increase their diet. They only ate which they were used to take before lactation. During lactation period again the sex of the lactated child affected the diet of mother.

The 66% lactating respondents had informed that when they lactated to male child, they used special food substances i.e. *desi-ghee*, milk, greater amount of *lassi* etc. So that they could feed their son with nutrient and greater amount of milk. She (the mother) was also given some privilege in the distribution of food among family members when she lactated to male child as she was feeding to family's future productive member. While no special diet was taken when female child was lactated. As during lactating to male child special foods were eaten by the mother, on the same way mother avoided some food item for the sake of boy's health e.g. *dal mong*, *dal churma*, cauliflower, Saag, etc. These are avoided because it is believed that they cause stomach problem to the lactated male child. As it is believed that his life expectancy is lower than girls. That is a reason mother's avoids hardly enzyme food items. The local proverb which is used to show male's lower life expectancy is

.....
 (desired things are always scarce)

While the local proverb used to explain higher survival expectancy of female in spite of all discrimination and carelessness is

..... *گھریاں ہوتی ہیں لڑکیاں اور مر جاتی ہیں لڑکیاں* (means that girls have greater potential to survive, they won't die until take dowry).

An other local belief is that female's growth rate is higher than male. The 87% respondent believed that whether male child was preferably served with nutrient food items and female was not even given proper meals, in spite of all these discrimination in food distribution, growth rate of female was higher than that of male. The local proverb used to define the situation is

..... *گھریاں ہوتی ہیں لڑکیاں اور مر جاتی ہیں لڑکیاں*

Lastly, food distribution among the family members is effected by the gender beliefs in the sense that it sets totally different domains for male and female individuals. As I have already mentioned, male are considered to be the head of household, bread winner, economic asset, continue family name, protect family women and are permanent members of family who provide social security for parents in old age. Where as female social roles are; they basically provide nourishment to their children, assist male and provide services, transient members of family, economical burden, and threat to the honour of family for which they are socially concealed.

These images about social roles and characteristics of male and female clearly give a higher status to male. As they enjoy privileges in food distribution and female who are their mothers, sisters, wife and daughters; they themselves give better food to men because they are made to believe, men need more nutritional diet in greater amount, than that of given to female .

These traditions of food consumption which in fact are based upon gender beliefs against female prevail in all three studied income groups that are lower, middle and upper. But it is found that nutritional status of female is severely poor, in low income group. Because they have very limited resources which are used to nourish productive permanent members of the family. It is also found that to some extent higher literacy rate affects the adherence of hot/cold dichotomy but the gender beliefs adherence prevail among all literate and illiterate people, so it

can be rightly said that dietary choices of pre-pubescent and pubescent females are effected by the prevailing gender beliefs. In short, the data has proved my hypothesis.

ANALYSIS, SYNOPSIS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Analysis

This chapter deals with analysis, synopsis and conclusion part of the research. First part of this chapter present analysis of the fields data which would present inferences, made on the basis of relevant social theory.

Analysis is very important part of any social research because through it acquired data is interpreted, inferences are made, which leads to a conclusion. For the purpose to interpret data, I have chosen Marx's theory of Historical Materialism. Because it is the most suitable theory for the analysis of villagers food habits. As it was found that individuals dietary choices were directly proportional to the economic status that they have.

The hypothesis of my field research was that gender beliefs effect the dietary choices of the female, the data which has been collected from the villagers, and discussed in the previous chapters. It has mentioned that economic factors determine cultural and social features of a society. As it is found that individuals are internalised with food habits from their childhood, according to the economic roles, they have had to perform in the society. And theory of Historical Materialism is the one, according to which economic sphere is determining factor of any society. Also that society has tree levels; forces of production, relationship of production and super structure. It is the mode of production which gives birth to a set of expatiation beliefs that legitimate the exploitation of the group of people who have control over means of production. Claude Meillassaux also applied this theory to understand Guro society. By considering Marx's and Meillassaux's approach, first of all I'll looked into

economic system of the village. Because, according to this approach, mode of production determine super structure.

The village economy is based on agricultural. In the near past agriculture was the major occupation of the villagers. But now the village male prefer to be indulged in to many other occupations i. e., business, government services, driving, etc. Business is the most favourite profession of the villagers. But if we keenly look in to the occupational indulgence of the villagers, we would be found that even now village occupation rotates around agriculture, and the major transaction of the village deals with agricultural medicines, tools, crops whole sale (.....) etc. It was also found that agriculture was subsistent occupation of the villagers. Those who were in govt. services, or in other jobs, grew crops for yearly consumption. Hence, it can be said that village economy is basically agricultural and land is the main source of production in this economy.

According to Marx, the people who controlled the means of production, they formulate "bourgeois class" who exploit the other group for the maximisation of their own interests. For this purpose set of beliefs are formulated which legitimates their exploitative behaviour.

Informal discussion and observation revealed that in the village the major mean of production (Land) both legally and practically possessed by male members of family. I didn't find even single case in which land ownership belongs to a woman. So male members of the family formulate bourgeois class who exploit the other group of family that's female who have no control over the means of production. Hierarchy among the family member of the village was found according to the level of control over means of production, which was as; elder male had ownership of land, so they were most influential members of family. Then on second level young male member came who had to work on the land for production. And on the bottom level, there were females, totally dependent on male for their survival. They (female) formulated proletariat class.

In the literature review part of the 1st chapter, we have discussed that individuals have enjoyed their share in all spheres of life according to the status they have. This hierarchy of status is also observed in the domain of food. The most influential person gets privilege in the distribution of food.

In the village, it was a social norm that male members should be served 1st and they should also be given privilege in the distribution of food. Among the male, usually, the head of family got the best portion from the available food items, being the most influential person. After serving all the male, the female took their diet from the left over food substances. The individuals consumed food items by keeping in mind their after effects. Some food items are considered hot while others are cold. And the villagers especially, the women considered this classification when they took their meal, so it didn't allow them to take a balanced diet.

The informal discussion and observation also revealed that this classification was not consciously adhered to by the female. So their diet would be more unbalanced than those who didn't consider this classification and if they did, it was very limited. Hot food items which are in fact nutritious food items, but considered a taboo for female in all life stages except post-partum period. It can be concluded that this food classification leads to an unbalanced diet for female.

The situation could be analysed on two levels. At the first level they (female) were served at the end with left over edibles because they didn't have productive value. And also as Pakistani society is a patri-local society where after marriage females have to live with their husband and his family. So they are considered transient members both in their father's as well as in their husband's family. And of course permanent productive members of the family would be taken as more desired members that's the reason they would be served preferably.

Dowry is very important institution of village marriage pattern, responsible for the decline of the transient member's status. This custom leads to consider female an economic burden. As they have legal right on the land (which is the only source of production in agricultural economy), and fear of division of this land, have made females more undesired. They are discriminated in food consumption pattern, as they are weighed as an economic loss. It is also believed that their survival would create more social, political, and economical problem.

On the second level, the above mentioned dietary pattern could be analysed that the under lie purpose of this pattern is to control women being as producers of labour. The main objective is to control female's sexuality in order to escape from the problem of inheritance. In short, it can be said that women aren't provided with enough and nutrient food items, so that they won't develop any desire to sex. As it was believed that nutritional diet raise Harmon which create an urge for sexual desire. That's the reason all the nutrient foods are with held from female through different sort of belief about female body and food nature.

In reference to above mentioned logic which are given for the analysis, it could be said that in the village such norms and beliefs about male and female physical and social behaviour are prevailed, which give them a status on the basis of it they get their share in food. The beliefs about female/male physique, growth rate, ethnomedical notion about body nature and social roles are found that they should be smart while male should be powerful; female growth rate is higher than male; female body nature is believed hotter than male ; and the domain of procreation goes to female, while males are considered producers. According to Marx these above mentioned beliefs recommends that in the village such norms and beliefs are prevailed which insured that male (producers) always would be able to have enough amount of nutritional diet. This situation analysis also has point out that female family members are discriminated in food distribution pattern which leads to poor nutritional status of females. To justify my point here I would like to mention that proportion of male members is higher than female, males are 53 % of the total population of the village.

Through these beliefs the males (bourgeois) exploit the females. And to legitimate this exploitation, the dominant group also take help from religion and religious saying e.g. "Hadis" and Islamic laws are interpreted according to their own interests. For example the villagers has justified privilege given to male in the sphere of food that it is according to law of inheritance, female should be given half of the share given to male.

These belief and religious justifications formulate a permanent set of ideas which cover all the spheres of life. According to Marx's point of view, it is called ideology which causes false consciousness, according to it all the member of society believed that they are on the right place and prevailing system is fine. Due to this consciousness both male and female has consider this prevailing food pattern legitimate, which shows a crystal clear discrimination against female.

It is found that it has made even parents to discriminate their own children (female) in food & in breast feeding the female child is fed for longer period than that of the baby boy. The given reason was that they wanted to show more love but I'd analyse it with reference to Marx, it is find that the girl children are fed for longer period, not due to love. But it was because parents wanted to escape from the expenditures that they would have to incurred on transient and non productive member, in the case when she was not breast fed. This consciousness is so deep rooted that the women who have control over the sphere of meal in order to restore their own position in the family.

Now it would be attempted to see how these beliefs has come to be that dictate the dietary choices of individuals and also cause poor nutritional condition for female. By keeping Marxist theory into mind, it can be said that on one frowned is result of historical occupation of village which is even now existed agriculture because Marx says that ideas, beliefs and concept are indirect result of the process of production. And in this occupation male get privilege due to their prominent role in production, so the second procedure of their

formulation is development of exploitation. In short we can say that these gender beliefs are a product of the process of production. Because process of exploitation on also took birth from the economic system. So we can say that in fact economic system of any society is the major factor which leads to formulation of specific gender beliefs which justify and strengthen this system. And we already has discussed that the prevailing dietary pattern which clearly discriminate female members of family, is directly proportionate to the gender beliefs.

Hence, the analysis has proved the hypothesis of my research that gender beliefs determines the dietary choices of female. And as pubescent female are more aware and conscious about these beliefs, so their nutritional conditions are poor than that of pubescent females.

6.2 SYNOPSIS AND CONCLUSION

The research was aimed to explore the socio-cultural perceptions of gender images especially the food consumption pattern of prepubescent and pubescent females base these images in a village situated in Multan division. Study explains people's beliefs, view^{ore} understanding about body nature growth rate and social roles. This is an attempt to know how female's dietary choices and nutritional status are effected by the prevailing gender beliefs. A part from seeing the relationship between the notion of gender and food consumption pattern, natives categorisation of female's about their physical conditions have also been noted and tried to figure out avoidance and preferences in utilisation of specific food substances in to different physical conditions. Comparison between the dietary choices of prepubescent and pubescent females and between the perception recorded by educated and uneducated informants belonging to different economic groups have been briefly drawn. This is also an attempt to figure out the factors which influence the nutritional status of the females and what impact does education and economic conditions lay on people's image of beauty and food consumption pattern. The social and cultural values and beliefs that are reflected in their views regarding food choices of females.

To conduct research on this topic a Multani village, naming "Santy Phatak" was chosen. On the way from vehari to Burewal, lies a small town, Machian Wala. Sanity Phatak is at a distance of 3 Kms north east of this town. The village is occupied by a majority of Punjabi speaking Arains, who are predominantly agriculturists, however, they also indulged in other occupations which vary from government services to wage labour. The society is patriarchal where preference is given to endogamy though exogamy is also practised.

Due to lack of awareness about nutritional needs, discrimination against female in food consumption pattern, adherence of hot/cold classification of food items and specially gender beliefs, females suffer from bad nutritional condition which leads them to toward anaemia, higher mortality rate of mothers and infants etc. So from the academic point of view, the area was quite suitable to carry out research on gender beliefs as a major factor to effect the dietary choices of females.

A number of anthropological research techniques and methods are used for the purpose of research on the above mentioned topic. Among the major techniques employed in research are participant observation, key informants, case study, survey method, socio- economic survey and photography. A sample of forty eight female informants were chosen through purposive sampling. It was such selected that it also included educated and uneducated informants belonging to lower middle and upper economic group, proportionately according to their percentage of size in the village, so that comparison and contrast between these categories could also be easily drawn.

It is an established fact that the factors like physical environment, occupational patterns and population distribution by age and sex cannot be ignored while understanding the food consumption pattern of a society. The specific social organisation consisting of the rules of family. Kinship and authority pattern which determine systems, rituals, life cycle, ceremonies etc. are thought to play a vital role in determining the food choices of the individuals. This

perception basically directs, moulds or modifies the ways of behaving, thinking and believing of the people of a particular community. Their perception about dietary choices and food consumption pattern reveals many cultural values of their set-up.

Food is the basic concern of all human societies, who share a common need to meet certain fundamental conditions of survival. The substance consumed for survival by various people of the world are subject to relativity within the realms of food ideologies which, dictate the development of attitudes, beliefs, tastes, taboos, avoidance's and customs in relation to diet consumed.

The analysis observation and informal discussions has defined food as it is an interrelationships between the forces of availability, acceptability, norms, values and status of society members. In the village, sphere of food is controlled by the female family members and good cooking is taken one of the major factors which helps a woman to attain status in the family. To show their perfection in cooking, the women cook different dishes. Any how, the consumption of food substances vary according to seasonal variation but the main component of the people's diet is "Rotie" made up of wheat, and all other food substances e.g. meat, vegetables dals etc. rotate around it. Even in low income group 'rotie' is considered a complete meal. The distribution of food among family members varies according to the importance and social status of the person in the family. According to the field data 86% families males always get privilege in food distribution pattern and if they aren't at home on meal time their portion is left aside before serving to other members of the family. The person who distribute food showed her love and care for the privileged person through giving him/her preference in food.

The distribution of food among family member has socio-cultural basis rather than physiological grounds. The major noted factors which in fact determine the distribution pattern among family are prevailing concept toward food and gender beliefs about male and female.

All the food items consumed in the community whether core foods or secondary food items are generally attributed as hot and cold. According to results of questionnaire 27% people always, 69% sometimes and 4% never considered this classification. Which infers that in the village temporary avoidance of hot /cold classification of food items prevailed. It was generally observed that this classification is related to vulnerable group such as women during prepubescent, after child birth and breast feeding, weaning etc.

Gender belief is another factor which effects the dietary choices of individual. Quite different image about male and female member of society are observed which are according to their social roles that they are to perform in the family and on broader level in the society. The gender beliefs about males/females physique, body nature, growth rate and social roles; male should be strong, broad and healthy, while, female should be smart, male body nature is cold while female's is hot, male growth rate is lower than female; and male are productive while duty of procreation goes to female, they are basically helper's. These gender beliefs clearly give higher status to male i.e. a reason they are preferentially treated in dietary pattern.

After comparing the gender beliefs and hot/cold classification on the dietary choices. It is found that in fact gender beliefs basically determine the dietary choices of individuals especially the females because hot/cold food avoidance based upon the prevailing gender beliefs rather than physiological grounds. So gender beliefs effect the dietary pattern of the females the day they take birth.

Its a truth that in all economical groups gender beliefs prevail and dietary choices are made on its basis. Its also found that due to these beliefs females are discriminated in food pattern in all these groups but in poor families this discrimination is very sever because the scarce and limited resources are only utilised for permanent productive members. Through out the course of research , I found a marked difference between the perception of educated and uneducated informants. The educational people do believe on gender images, but they don't adhere

hot/cold classification of food items, so strictly e.g., educated mothers don't try to withhold egg from the diet of their daughters as compared to the mothers who are uneducated.

The observation, analysis and informal discussion points out that nutritional conditions of prepubescent female is better than pubescent females, because they themselves are not very much conscious about the gender images and are also socially mobile, so they usually get enough amount of diet. While on the other hand female's strict adherence of hot/cold classification of food items, strong consideration of gender images in dietary choices, and repeated pregnancies lead them toward poor nutritional status. This situation proves my hypothesis, that gender beliefs determine differences in dietary choices of prepubescent and pubescent females.

In the end I would like to mention that this research work was a humble contribution towards historical materialism as it first time deals with female group of population. It has found that there are in fact two classes in the society i.e., male and female. Where males are bourgeois class and females are treated as discriminated proletariats in all spheres of life.

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A GLOSSARY OF LOCAL WORDS

| | |
|----------|---|
| Azan | Call for saying prayer among muslim. |
| Aqiqa | Occasion of sacrificing goat or goats on the birth of boy and girl. |
| Angithee | A mud hearth burner in which coal is burnt. |
| Ajwaine | The seed of a plant of the dill kind, also used as medecine. |
| Badi | A believed nature of food items as well as body |
| Baramdah | Is a covered place in front of the rooms |
| Burqa | A coat like dress which is used by women to cover face and body |
| Chaddar | A larg piece of cloth which is used to cover themselves by the women |
| Chopal | Is a place in the village where men get together and discuss issues of their interets |
| Chillah | Is the period after birth, consist of 20-40 days. In this period usually new born and mother are't allowed to go out. |

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| Dal | Curry. |
| Dhottie | Men's traditional dress in punjab, consist on a piece of cloth which is tied around the waste. |
| Dopatta | A piece of cloth women wear on their heads |
| Desi-Ghee | The ghee which is made up of butter. |
| Ghee | Is the oil which is used for Cooking. |
| Ghur | Locally made suger. |
| Ghuttie | First in take traditionally given to new born |
| Hulva | A type of sweat dish made up (Soji + suger) |
| Huttie | Shop |
| Kutcha Jissa | Un ripe body(similarity) |
| Khutna | Circumcision of a male child |
| Khana | Meal |
| Katcha | Made up of earth |
| Kharif | Winter season crops. |
| Khass | Special |
| Khusras | Traditional dancers |
| Kummies | The people engage in sapie system |
| Luddos | A type of sweet |
| Lassi | Curd |
| Muharam | 1st month of Islamic calander |
| Mubarkan | Congratulation |
| Nashta | Break fast |

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|------------|--|
| Nain | Wife of Nie(Village specialist who perform various rituals on the birth and deaths). |
| Phery-wala | Hawker |
| Purdah | Concept of concealing the women |
| Punjeeri | A kind of special dish used by women during post partum period. |
| Rao | Suger-cane juice |
| Salan | Curry(vegetable or meat) |
| Sehra | It is made up of sharien leaves which is hanged on entrance door of the house where a baby born. |
| Shalwar | Pajama, a part of Pakistan's national dress. |
| Sunnie | A sect in Islam |
| Shia'as | An other sect in Islam |
| Tawi | A kind of burner which is larger in size larger in size and is locally used to cook chapaties |
| Tandoor | A type of oven which is also used for cooking |

QUESTIONNAIRE

- Q1. How many meals do you take per day.
(a) 2 meals (b) 3 meals
- Q2. At what timings these meals are eaten.
- Q3. Is any thing else eaten between these main meals.
- Q4. Who decides about the dish which is to be cooked.
- Q5. Who bought or provide the food items for cooking.
- Q6. Who cook the food.
(a) Mother (b) Wife (c) daughter (d) Sister
- Q7. Do all the family member take the meals together.
(a) Yes (b) No
- Q8. If No, who eat first.
- Q9. Is there any order of serving food.
(a) Yes (b) No
- Q10. Who distributed the food.
(a) Mother (b) Wife (c) Daughter (d) Mother in law
- Q11. Is food distribution effected by gender preference.
(a) Yes (b) No
- Q12. If yes, which gender group get privileged.
(a) Male (b) Female
- Q13. What are the reasons of privilege.
(a) Productive member (b) Continue family name
(c) They need more energy (d) Show love
- Q14. Do food intake effect the health of any person.
(a) Yes (b) No
- Q15. Do you believe on hot/cold effect of food items.
- Q16. Do you consider these hot/cold effect of food items, when you eat something.
(a) Sometimes (b) Always (c) Never

- Q17. Which are the harmful combinations in diet.
(a) Fish-Milk (b) Water melon-Water (c) Guava-Water
(d) Any other milk and egg (e) Rice-Milk (f) Lussy-Milk
- Q18. Which food items should not eaten by pubescent female.
(a) Eggs (b) Meat (c) Fish (d) Dry fruits (e) Dry Dates
(f) Unripe Mango (g) Anything else
- Q19. Should women increase their diet during menstruation, pregnancy, and lactation.
(a) Yes (b) No
- Q20. If yes, what should eat.
(a) Meat (b) Milk (c) Eggs (d) tea (e) Fruits
(f) All available (g) Any thing else
- Q21. After delivery, which food items should not be eaten.
- Q22. Is the mother diet effected by the sex of new born.
- Q23. Is there any specific time duration for new mother, not to eat particular food items.
- Q24. What is the time period of child breast feeding.
- Q25. Is the duration of male and female child's breast feeding equal.
(a) Yes (b) No
- Q26. If yes, which gender group get privilege.
(a) Male (b) Female
- Q27. What are the reasons of this privilege.
- Q28. What are the reasons of existing male/female dichotomy in our society.
(a) Biological (b) Social
- Q29. What are the main physical attributes of a beautiful woman.
- Q30. What, do you think , a healthy woman should be.
(a)Lean (b) Normal (c) Fat
- Q31. What are the attributes of an ideal man.
- Q32. On which ideological grounds you have made these ideas.

