

Pakistani Feminist Fiction and the Empowerment of Women

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Introduction

Fiction is born out of the society in which it lives and thrives. It continuously influences the living styles of the society. It does not ignore the changes in the society, synchronic or diachronic, rather portrays them in a befitting manner. For this purpose, a fiction writer portrays an ideal world which teaches, delights, and improves upon the existing set of circumstances. As such, he constructs a world of fiction, which, though abstract, is beautiful and attractive. Through this process the fiction writer succeeds in penetrating a message into the very soul of the society. In the portrayal of society, the representation of women emerges as the most significant aspect for the writers of English fiction as a part of feminism.

Feminism is basically a movement that demands equal rights for women. It aims to identify women as creative and equal contributors of values. Some radical feminists, furthermore, think that the writing of women cannot be judged rightly by male critics and hence these women believe in gynocriticism. The feminist movement came further into the limelight because of modern Western writers like Virginia Woolf and Henrik Johan Ibsen. Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879) were of the first to develop a feminist consciousness. This consciousness was further enhanced by Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1953), while Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, and Helene Cixous are other significant women writers who discovered new dimensions in the field of feminism. Based on the images of women represented in Western literature, especially English literature, such new dimensions of feminism were considered Western. But new dimensions of feminism continue to spread because, under the influence of colonialism, literatures in English are being produced all around the world. This trend is visible in Pakistani writers who demonstrate a feminist approach in their works.

The portrayals of women by Pakistani fiction writers should also be seen in the context of postcolonial feminism. Pakistani fiction may be a part of postcolonial fiction, which is fiction produced mostly in the former British colonies (India, Australia, and major parts of Africa and Asia have been British colonies). As Bill Ashcroft suggests in *The Empire Writes Back* (2002), the literatures produced in

these areas are mostly a reaction against the negative portrayals of the local culture by the colonizers. About the role of postcolonial literature with respect to feminism, Ashcroft writes

Literature offers one of the most important ways in which these new perceptions are expressed and it is in their writings and though other arts such as painting, sculpture, music, and dance that the day today realities experienced by the colonized peoples have been most powerfully encoded and so profoundly influential. (1)

Likewise, postcolonial writers explore themes of struggles for independence, culture, and displacement and feminism in their local settings. The use of these themes in the writings of postcolonial writers was not accidental but a deliberate phenomenon (Ashcroft 2002). The issue of feminism in fiction, as a part of post colonialism, is significant and particular in this context. Postcolonial fiction mostly portrays the injustice, oppression, and the exploitation by the colonizers. It extends and portrays that the lives of women were doubly affected by the process of colonizing. Before British colonialism, for example, life of Indian Muslim women was segregated and limited to the small world in which they lived and died, usually without making any significant mark in the society. Azra (2000) points out,

They were prevented from taking any part in the corporate life of the college concerned. They sat apart in the classroom, hardly mixed with their fellow men students, and had no opportunity to participate in the activities like the gymkhana or the debating society. In short, they formed a small world of their own. (47)

The impact of British imperialism caused even more changes at almost all the social levels which influenced the women as well. Women started to realize that they were kept deliberately out of the main flow of life by being denied many rights. This realization was because of the gradual spread of modern education among Muslim women in India. This led slowly but surely to the opening of public spaces for women. The degree of this change among Muslim women was not as considerable as it was in the case of their Hindu sisters (Azra 2000). But, nonetheless, the change resulted in social and domestic conflicts for women of this area. Their demand of equal rights and individualism gave birth to feminism which was further enhanced because of female participation in freedom movements in India. This is the very reason that Third World Feminism is often related to postcolonial feminism, as Young (2005) has also pointed out: "In the post colonial state, post colonial feminism begins from the perception that its politics are framed by the active legacies of Colonialism" (109).

Therefore, the voice of feminism is more audible in postcolonial fiction, including Pakistani fiction, than anywhere else. The writers of postcolonial fiction

have tried to portray women and women's issues in many such situations as said above. Third World women tend to be depicted as victims of male control and of traditional cultures. According to Mohanty (1991), Third World women, like Western women, are produced as subjects in historically and culturally specific ways by the societies in which they live and act as agents. In this context, one dominant aspect of the postcolonial Pakistani fiction is that it portrays both happy and unhappy images of women in Pakistan and hence tries to portray the role models through which the unhappy women can make their lives better. Young (2005) also supports this point of view when he says,

Postcolonial feminism is certainly concerned to analyze the nervous conditions of being a woman in a post colonial environment, whether in the social oppression of the post colony or the metropolis. Its concern is not in the first place with individual problems but with those that affect the whole communities. (115)

Pakistani fiction is the continuation and extension of the fiction produced under the colonial rulers in India. As such it has inherited all the pros and cons of the fiction in India before the end of the colonial rule in Indo-Pak. Feminism has been one part of this larger body of literature. All this makes Pakistani fiction a part of postcolonial fiction. Pakistani writers have portrayed the lives of Pakistani women under the imposing role of religious, social, and economic parameters. These roles are partly traditional and partly modern day realities women face. Women in Pakistani fiction have been shown constantly developing and changing. They are portrayed mostly as round characters, which are initially bound and restrained by the chain of customs and tradition. They are depicted also as possessed by the demons of the social taboos which are man-made and used to control the lives of the women. Writers show that women find themselves on the many horned dilemma while going through such circumstances. They were colonized and declared to be the 'others' and silent majority (subalterns). This subaltern status also dates back to the past traditions of this subcontinent. The Muslim and Hindu religion further contributed in making these taboos even stronger. The postcolonial men re-colonized the bodies and minds of their women as a reaction and in an effort to preserve their cultural values. Women, as in the past, were supposed to carry the burden of cultural values as an offshoot of post colonialism. But the same has brought also modern day realities to the forefront along with a new consciousness for women. This ignited the process of mental freedom though the bodies were still colonized by men. Pakistani writers emphasize this factor in their fiction through the portrayals of women characters. These women characters evolve gradually through a process of psychological development from a suffering, weeping, and subaltern woman to a confident and independent woman. The writers use various channels of women's

life in order to portray these changes in the images of women. Herein, an exploration of the same will be made and the changing models of women in Pakistani fiction will be analyzed.

In the Pakistani context, this awareness dates back to the establishment of educational foundation by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. It was further strengthened because of the independence movement for Pakistan in which women were called upon to play a very significant role. As the pioneer of women rights, Mohammad Ali Jinnah demanded an equal participation of women in all spheres of life. These initial role models of women continued their struggle for women's rights after the independence, as well, and in 1948 were able to achieve women's rights to property in Pakistan. Even before partition, this Pakistani women's movement was portrayed by Mumtaz Shahnwaz in her novel, *The Heart Divided* (1990), which can be called the starting point for Pakistani feminist writings in English.

But this spirit of independence died down very soon and women were again confined within the four walls of their homes and they were deprived of the hard-earned status. This resulted in the establishment of resistance groups like Women Action Forum, which resisted passage of anti-women laws. Discrimination against women, however, continued to find its place in literature. Literature created by Pakistani writers was never unconscious of this need.¹

The life and suffering of and the discrimination against women have found place in the pages of English fiction in Pakistan and this has been helpful in developing a Pakistani feminist fiction. It also removes the doubts of certain Western critics who say that there is no feminist debate in Pakistani fiction. The feminist movement is developing and working constantly under its own circumstances. Moreover, it has taken ground also because of the postcolonial aspect of Pakistani literature in English. This postcolonial feminism can be very easily traced in the form of images of women created by the Pakistani fiction writers in English.

Portrayals of Women in Pakistani Fiction

Writers like Bapsi Sidhwa, Mohsin Hamid, Zulifkar Ghose, Talat Abbasi, and Qaisra Shahraz are significant because of the portrayals of women in their fiction. Sidhwa's *The Bride* (2006) portrays a four-year-old girl who matures into a woman. She grows up under the control of a man from Kohistan, namely Qasim who found her when he was returning from Amritsar to Lahore by a train after the establishment of Pakistan. The train was attacked by the Sikhs and the girl, whose name originally was Munni but later named Zaitoon by Qasim, lost her parents. Qasim brings the girl to Lahore where she becomes young under the loving and caring affection of both Qasim khan and Zohra, a neighbor and wife of Nikka Pehlwan² at Lahore. Qasim treats Zaitoon with a fatherly affection and love but when she grows

up, he marries her to one of his relatives living in the mountains of Pakistan. The girl is never consulted about the biggest decision of her life and also the requests of Zohra and Nikka not to marry her so far away are turned down under the plea of the word given to his clan's men. Zaitoon was supposed to adopt a culture that was not only unknown to her but also much different from the one in which she was brought up so affectionately. After her marriage, she could not reconcile with the brutal nature of her husband. She was beaten harshly, given undesirable food, and made to work hard. She raised her voice and was mercilessly beaten. She escaped from the village and spent at least fifteen days in the mountains trying to reach the safest bridge constructed by the Pakistan army but only after going hungry and being raped. Luckily, she escapes all this and is ultimately rescued by the army.

The account of Sidhwa's fiction regarding feminism is never complete unless we refer to the feminism portrayed in the novel *The Ice-Candy Man* (1988). This novel particularly portrays the impact of partition on the lives and bodies of women. The writer portrays the double impact of British colonialism through the character of Ayah (Shanta). Women's bodies were twice colonized, first by the British and then by the men in the Indo-Pak subcontinent, as suggested by Sara Suleri (1989). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak also claims that women in the subcontinent were simply a silent majority whom she termed as subalterns. According to her, this aspect of women in India had become even stronger because of the impact of colonialism (Morton 2000). Pre-partition-Shanta is the object of attraction for many Muslim and non-Muslim men, especially Masseur. But post-partition-Shanta is only a ravaged and molested woman who has nothing to fall back upon other than selling her body as a dancing woman. None of her lovers could save her from becoming so. Shanta is not one woman but a representative of thousands of Hindu, Muslim and other minority women who were raped, killed, and cut to pieces because of the aftermaths of British imperialism. But with her courage and determination she survives and ultimately reaches her family in Amritsar. In her novel, *An American Brat* (1994), Sidhwa shows very clearly that the women who are born and live in Pakistan under social and religious restrictions can thrive only in the world which allows them full utilization of their talent. She portrays the character of Ferouza in the novel *An American Brat* (1994). Ferouza, born and bred in Pakistan, was able to harness her talent fully only when she lived in the United States of America, so much so that she was able to question the validity of the religious norms of marriage in her Parsee community.

The novel *Murder of Aziz Khan* (1998) by Zulifkar Ghose portrays feminism with a different perspective. Among the most significant women characters is Razia, the wife of the eldest of the Shah brothers, Ayub. Razia is the mother of the two girls but not satisfied with her life even when she is the wife of a rich business-

man and landlord. In the deep recesses of her heart there is restlessness, and she has been nurturing the traditional trivialities of the woman as a human being so much that she wants to let down her other women-fellows at her home. She feels pride for having daughters, especially because Faridha, the wife of the second shah brothers, does not have any children due to the reasons of her husband, Akram. But she also feels that she does not have a son who could inherit all the property; she expects that something may happen in future. However, she suffers from another weakness, which is the frailty of woman. This is her strange passion for her brother-in-law, Afaq, the third of the shah brothers. To satisfy herself about this passion she travels to London, under the impression that she will arrange for her girls' education, and meets Afaq. But she is clever enough to get rid of the consequences of her meeting with him. Afaq stands segregated from the rest of the family because of her manipulations. Social taboos are basically responsible for this type of behaviour of Razia.

Another woman in this family is a special victim of circumstances as well as man's follies. Zarina has a miserable life because of her father's concealment that she is the illegitimate daughter of Akram; yet, he never acknowledges this publicly, and instead she is made to believe that she is a cousin of the family. She harbors a feeling of love for Afaq who in reality is her uncle but she is ignorant of this reality. The marriage can't take place, as she is the daughter of Akram. Although she belongs to a rich family, she cannot enjoy her life according to her own wishes, circumstances resulting from Akram's irresponsible attitude. Zarina is also the victim of men's wrongdoings. But it is she who has to suffer the pangs of failure in love.

Even in recent times, the trends of treating women inhumanly are available in Pakistani fiction in English. One example is Qaisra Shahraz's *The Holy Woman* (2002), which shows similar trends pertaining to women and feminism in Pakistan. Zarri Bano and her mother Shahzada are among the chief characters. Zarri Bano is forced by her father to become a 'holy woman'³ to protect the land and honor of the family. Zarri Bano sacrifices all she had in her life including her love and freedom. She becomes a 'holy woman' to challenge this custom and fulfills its requirements but ultimately wins in defeating the myth of the custom. Not only Zarri Bano but also Firdous, Kaneez, and Shahzada undergo similar kinds of circumstances. This is Shahraz' particular way: to show common women how they can learn from the lives of rich women and change their lives for the better.

Mohsin Hamid goes still further in his novel, *The Moth Smoke* (2000), and provides tiny glimpses out of the life of Mumtaz,⁴ an urban woman who suffers from the neglect of her husband. But Mumtaz learns to survive by finding creative work. She meets many people and chronicles the lives of prostitutes. The writer tries to send the message that if such women find suitable and creative work, they can live their lives well. Mumtaz is the wife of a rich business man Aurangzeb,

who is himself a son of a wealthy army man turned business man. Mumtaz is a foreign qualified woman and enjoys the freedom of speech, friendship, roaming, parties, late night functions, and works also as a journalist clandestinely under the pen name of Manto. The major cause of the Mumtaz's life style cannot be anything other than the dissatisfaction and neglect of her husband in her domestic life. The writer seems to imply that many women from the upper strata of Pakistan suffer from solitariness even after enjoying maximum possible rights and the power to exercise such rights.

Nadeem Aslam tells the story of many women including Koukab and Surraya in *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004). Koukab tries desperately to maintain her Islamic piety as she struggles to come to terms with a double murder and its corrosive effect on her family. Koukab is very religious-minded and is the daughter of a mosque leader. However, the worst fate is that of Surraya who has been divorced by her husband and is now seeking a proper man in order to re-marry and get a re-divorce in order to fulfill her legal obligations to Islamic law. Surraya suffers mental and physical abuse because of social taboos and her husband's irresponsible attitude. She has to leave her home and her son and sleep with another man to fulfill the conditions for re-joining her family in Pakistan.

Furthermore, the short stories in *Cactus Town and Other Short Stories* (2002) by Aamir Hussein portray the oppressive social and political conditions in which Pakistani women live and move. For example, in the story "The Needle Woman's Calendar", we find the portrayal of Tabinda who married Sohayl but had to suffer because of the wrongdoings of Sohayl. Tabinda was left alone after her husband went abroad and was even more shocked when he returned with his English bride. She could not digest it all. She decided to quit and survive on her own. As soon as she reached Karachi, she removed the veil and left it on the seat of the train. Only after this did she gain confidence and remove her sufferings. This made her powerful and she was able to utter the most powerful sentence: that she wanted to divorce Sohayl.

Feminism in Pakistani Fiction

As indicated above, Pakistani fiction writers have been portraying the ever-changing status of women in their society. These writers have portrayed poor women as well as rich women, educated as well as uneducated women, old women as well as young women. Through all these aspects, the writers have indicated and enunciated the psychologies of Pakistani women and the underlying factors working at the background. They have done so because these aspects play a major role in determining the social and political role of women in society. Here I analyze some of the portrayals of women given above.

In *The Moth Smoke* (2000), Mumtaz feels neglected by her husband and becomes disturbed; but very soon, with the help of a friend, she finds a pastime. Like any other educated and rich lady, Mumtaz feels that her life is restricted after her marriage. Her husband Ozi remains absorbed in his own world and pays very little attention to her. This creates a sense of loss in Mumtaz, and she is even more confused about the purpose of her life. The parties and functions held in and around her house do not comfort her because she is totally upset. She needs time, love, devotion, and attention from her husband which she finds drastically lacking. She was brought up to become a successful working woman and not to sit at home to be a babysitter. Her mind, therefore, is constantly working to find a way out of her aimless life, and she discovers a way of writing about the hidden lives of women in Pakistan. She visits the red-light area to interview an old and mature prostitute and collects a lot of material about her life and the way she came to that unaccepted mode of life. Mumtaz also gets an article published about the life of prostitutes.

The cause of much awkwardness in the social and sexual behavior of Mumtaz cannot be other than the dissatisfaction because of the neglect of her husband. If such a woman is given opportunity to independently exercise her mental faculties, while getting attention from males, she can be the best and most-benefiting individual for society. Hamid (2000) portrays in Mumtaz a woman who will not die after getting mad with her situation at home, rather she comes out and finds out happiness and satisfaction for herself through her work. Mumtaz is no more in a mood to bear the life pattern developed for her by her husband; rather she tries to make her life as happy as she deems fit.

Mental dissatisfaction is the cause of suffering for not only the rich and opulent women like Mumtaz but also for the women belonging to the poor segment of the society, though the factors responsible for this may be different. One of the basic reasons for the sufferings of women in this segment is the concept of honor for men. In order to preserve his honor and ego, a man will use women, and hence he becomes the biggest source of psychological upheaval for women. Sidhwa has highlighted one such idea in her novel *The Bride* (2006). Sidhwa provides a contrast at all levels between the lives of women in Punjab and those of the segregated fringes of the Indus River. The main idea behind this contrast is the warmth of feelings and emotions, which is replaced by jealousy and the harsh and uncontrollable anger against women in the north of Pakistan. Zaitoon, initially named Munni, was forced to marry an unknown hill man who had a different set of circumstances and could not adjust with Zaitoon's ways of living. The character portrayal of Zaitoon reflects two basic phases of her life: one in which she grows up under the loving people around her and a second in which she escapes from her bitter tribal possessors. The writer shows that the innocent girl from Punjab, who was ready and

willing to live a poor but satisfied life so long as she was treated with love, could not maintain her submissive posture in the face of customs and traditions of the tribal area. She decided to rebel and found courage to break the shackles of time and place. She became successful in doing so but at a price. This young woman is a model for women suffering because of the tyranny of tradition and custom. Zaitoon achieves the life of a free woman. But all this happened only after a long struggle and mental fearfulness.

A similar development takes place in Shanta in the *Ice-Candy Man* (1988), though the mode of emancipation was entirely different. Shanta had to pass through a great ordeal of losing a secure environment of the house of Lenny to find herself in the house of dancing girls. Shanta is a woman who is attractive, loving, caring and has a welcoming attitude towards all human beings. She welcomes everyone for comfort and peace like mother earth. But as usual, mother earth is deceived, battered, and divided because of brutal human action. Shanta loses trust even in her long standing lover because this same lover has found a way to sell her body, which is already bruised and battered. This changes Shanta and she turns from an innocent and loving girl into a mature woman who must seek a new identity. She openly refutes the love and care of her husband's affected love and asks her god-mother to help her reach her family in India. She would prefer her family and their care instead of giving love and care to a man who had brought her to a place where bodies of women are sold. Only after long suffering and coming to an understanding about the world around her could she make this choice and change.

The feudal women portrayed in Ghose's *Murder of Aziz Khan* (1998) are typical in nature and suffer from common affronts to female social psychologies. Razia and Farieda have an advantage over many: they are materially well off. But being wealthy does not release them from the grip of men who have total control over the economy and social being of their domestic lives. They are neither free nor independent from surrounding males and, in a way, they have no significant role to play other than to stay at home and take care of their families. So here the notion that the women of wealth enjoy more freedom and have a big say in their lives is falsified in a feudal set up.

Razia undergoes a very different type of psychological experiment and training. She does not develop economically but socially after her psychological training and is able to shed away many of her traditional womanly ghosts and prejudices. She had felt a passion for her brother-in-law, but this was out of jealousy and for the satisfaction of her sense of superiority. She wanted to defeat a young woman by proving that she could win the love of a young man even when she was the mother of two girls. But her experience in London taught her that men could not be sincere to any single woman. The mental corruption that she suffered

was also found in Afaq. Therefore, she becomes a better human being and has a more responsible share of her life with her family and not with Afaq. Razia also wins freedom and emancipation, not from the taboos and shackles of the Pakistani socio-political system but from her mental agonies and sufferings. Ghose also, like Hamid, traces out the desire and sentiments of women and then gradually proceeds to fulfillment and ultimately proves that the path adopted by Razia was not right. But her path was necessary because without such experiences she could never have understood Afaq and so could not have emptied him out of her. She goes back to her family and husband in a more positively agreeable way.

As mentioned earlier, in the case of Tabinda, the veil was the cover that had smashed her personality and made her stand behind her husband as a non-entity. But when her husband had separated from her, she removed her veil. This removal also indicates that she had to remove her shyness and over-protection from society, one that makes women feel helpless and dependent. She removes this cover and enters into a world of economic activity where, although a bit difficult in the beginning, became fruitful and she could live as successfully as possible. As someone who is abused, humiliated, and insulted by her husband, Tabinda becomes a role model by finding courage to overcome this humiliation to face the world: she actively changes her life for the better. The writer suggests that instead of suffering silently, women will attempt to make their own lives after quitting relationships which are unkind to them.

In the novel *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004), Surraya is faultless. It is her husband who drank wine and divorced her. He forced her to enter into another relationship in order to re-enter her own life and family. In her efforts to do so, she finds herself in an intimate relationship with Shamus, having sex with him even before making any arrangements for marriage. She tries to maintain her sanctity as a devout Muslim women but she needs the services of another Muslim male who should marry her and then divorce her as she wished. Surraya wants at every cost to marry Shamus and get a divorce in order to rejoin her separated family. But to her horror, she finds that Shamus does not want to marry her, and even if he did so he would not divorce her. With the passage of time, she feels guilty that her activities in England were wrong and again wonders what would happen if her boy began to hate her for spending so much time away from him. Surraya, who had wanted to make a large sacrifice in order to live with her family, learns in the end that all had led her to chaos and her path to set the things right was ultimately wrong. Therefore, she feels lost and divided between her desire and duty. She leaves everything blank because life got beyond her control and she drops all her plans to return to her family.

The above discussed images are of women who will not remain passive and will not continue to bear male-oppressive environments. These women seek to emancipate themselves through education, struggle, and hard work. Pakistani fiction writers portray the ever-changing status of women in their societies, images that demonstrate women as successful and yet as suffering. The women who are successful in acquiring a good status in Pakistani society may become role models for other women who are less fortunate in this matter. The fiction writer lights up the path for the miserable women by making his or her characters undergo a psychological development. This may go a long way to strengthen and improve the women's confidence in dealing with the day-to-day matters of their lives.

Conclusion

Pakistani fiction writers like Talat Abbasi, Qaisra Shahraz, Mohsin Hamid, Bapsi Sidhwa, and Zulifkar Ghose have made concerted efforts to bring to light the status of Pakistani woman. Their female portrayals are reflective of the psychological and behavioral changes women undergo to achieve the status of emancipation and empowerment. Women may suffer but they emerge to compete with society, and the whole process renders them more successful women. Women achieve maturity gradually in Pakistani fiction by rebelling against those factors which created such suffering. Faced with cultural constraints and linguistic barriers, the women of Pakistani fiction still engage in a constant struggle of becoming independent. Furthermore, Pakistani fiction writers have not concentrated on just one factor of women's lives; rather they have taken women from every section of society and have shown particular sufferings and problems. At times, upper-class women are the role models and yet other times they may suffer from many social and psychological issues. Nonetheless, rich or otherwise, most still suffer from many social taboos and political problems.

In order to highlight the sufferings and the struggles of women, these writers make their female characters undergo a difficult set of circumstances to train them in the art of life. These circumstances make these women better, by better understanding their responsibilities to society and, also importantly, their responsibility to themselves. They learn the art of living and hence liberate themselves from the unnecessary restrictions posed on them by traditional social systems. These Pakistani fiction writers have become a resource to guide other Pakistani feminist movements, much like that which has passed in Western fiction and criticism. Feminist voices were first raised in Western fiction, which later on paved the way for emancipation and empowerment of women in general. The Pakistani fiction writers have also set a base and pace for feminism in this region of the world and hopefully

it will succeed: although yet minimal, there are visible signs that Pakistani fiction is contributing to this greater cause of women in Pakistan.

Notes:

¹ Urdu literature even before partition was voicing its concern about the rights of women. The names of Deputy Nazir Ahmed, Malaya Chanda Bai, Bilquis Jamal, Rabia, Kaneez Fatima and Safia Shamim are worth mentioning in this regard. In recent times, Ada Jafri, Fehmida Riaz, and Kishwar Naheed are the main players in the modern Urdu literature in this regard. The tradition of Urdu Literature has been carried into English literature produced in this area.

² Nikka happens to be a sturdy wrestler and business partner of Qasim Khan.

³ A 'holy woman' is one who is married to the Holy Qura'an and is supposed to devote her life to the religious teachings and learning. This practice has been active in many areas of Sindh, Pakistan.

⁴ Also called Taji with affection.

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