'GENDERED DISCURSIVE PRACTICES': FROM TEXTBOOKS TO PAKISTANI URDU DIGESTS

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ABSTRACT:

Certain ideals of feminine beauty are paramount in the stories of Pakistani Urdu digests. Rendered as jovial, the female protagonist is matched to a reputed, handsome, most prominently a professional man who secures her a happy life. The present study focuses how customary representation of gender roles sustains in the narratives of different Urdu digests during a span of ten years maintaining the conventional representation of gender roles. The study examines the enforced stereotype portrayal of woman in Urdu Digests through exaggeration and subversion, representing her to be an ideally good girl, unequivocally beautiful, kind, and compassionate. Sunderland's working model of gendered discursive practices (2002) in relation to textbooks (originally created for teacher's talk around the text) has been adopted partially and modified to conform to the present study. The study finds the digest stories persistently undermine female roles by perpetuating stereotypes and reinforcing their image as one-dimensional. The study is helpful in understanding the role of print media creating a deadlock in the identity construction of women in Pakistani society. It also highlights the traditional concepts endorsed through such stories. A study can be conducted in future highlighting stereotypical representation of women in contemporary Pakistani dramas to reinforce patriarchal structures that designate gender imbalance, predominantly in the middle class of Pakistani society.

INTRODUCTION

The present study deals with the subject how stereotypical female characters are represented and reinforced through Urdu digest stories over decades in Pakistan. Four short stories namely "Khwahishun ki Musafatain", "Mehr Meeran", "Shab-e-Aarzoo", and "Teri Ik Nigah k Aseer" are selected from popular Urdu digests *Khwateen* (Feb 2012/June 2018) and *Shuaa* (Feb 2012/ July 2018) respectively. Gendered Text Model (Sunderland 2002) helped the present study to unravel conventional gender representation reinforced through fictional narratives over a period of one decade.

Language as a tool to spread knowledge often shapes ideologies. Discernment and 'categorization of experience' of a native speaker best determine the structure of a language (Sapir – Whorf 1929). It channelizes abstract human thoughts allowing factual objects to change into abstract symbols and ideas. Hence, the relationship of language with mind is a challenging one as language

through a cognitive process forms ideologies and beliefs of the society. It has the potential to establish interpersonal relationships, which develops the society and culture. "No matter how eloquently dog barks, it cannot tell you its parents were poor but honest" (Russell in Farb 1975, 259). Russell's thoughts reveal socio-cultural function of language and its power relations within the society. Shaping beliefs and ideologies of a social group, its prime function is 'cognitive' (Van Dijk 1994).

Furthermore, culture and language replicate each other. Culture is:

an integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, languages, practices, beliefs, values, customs, courtesies, rituals, manners of interaction and roles, relationships and expected behaviors of racial, ethnic, religious or social group, and the ability to transmit the above to the succeeding generation'(Brown & Jones 2000).

Eloquent and metaphorical language is significant in constructing identities. Language not only transmits culture but is also its integral component. Spoken discourse or written text set ideals and beliefs for the people; particularly fiction proliferate information to initiate inspiring reactions from the readers. People tend to read stories reflecting their personal interests. Digests provide them a condensed collection of short stories enjoyed in leisure.

Female digest culture has prevailed upon Pakistani society since its advent. Digest stories pass from generation to generation and direct the readers how relationships are exercised. Fictional representations of relationships have also caused massive damage to female identities. Romance stories affect readers psychologically and women identifying themselves with the protagonists idealize and fantasize their situation (Holland1980). In Pakistan, digests literature is popular among the females for entertaining and creating ideals. Almost every story offers morals to live up to such ideals, which create an enduring effect on a girl's psyche. Central ideals of beauty to the extent of making other characters envy are paramount in these stories. Represented as a carefree ignorant character, the female protagonist finds a match in the guise of a reputed, handsome, and most prominently professional man who ensures her a happy life (Khan et al. 2020).

Representation is an act or communication signifying an individual, group, or situation. It also means an act or detail of an individual symbolizing another and to exercise the rights and obligations of the individual represented. Unequivocally, it is as an image or likeness of an object, individual, or group. The present study explores female stereotype representation in Urdu digest stories. It contests the decade's long image reinforced in fiction by attributing behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits usually related to female sex. Socially constructed roles appropriated for men and women in a society leads to gender inequalities as distinct roles and behaviors of men and women methodically support one group and consequently build imbalances in their status.

The term 'gender' introduced in 1955 by a sexologist, John Money became widespread in 1970 with the emergence of feminist theory. Since then it has been used to denote the discrimination grown in special context. Status discrimination is widely founded on gender, as a global dimension. 'Men have always been afraid that women could get along without them' (Mead 1935).

Gender stereotypes generalize the roles of each gender labeling them stereotypes; a perspective that certain characteristics are 'the norm' and anticipated in every male and female. Female has always been categorized in lower status than male. Society promotes gender roles 'to be hierarchical and characterized as a male advantaged gender hierarchy by social constructionists' (Wood & Eagly, 2002). Stereotypes are commonly viewed as naive generalization about the gender characteristic, dissimilarity, and the role of individual. Traditionally, the female stereotypic role pertains to domesticity that is marriage, husband, children, and household. She is the embodiment of love, compassion, care, nourishment, and sympathy. Considered dependent on man, she needs his security to live a healthy and sheltered life. Man is the financial source. Assertive, competitive, independent, and courageous, he is career-focused who can easily hold his emotions under control. These assumed roles are frequently reinforced through different channels for assertion of patriarchal power.

Media among all is the powerful most apparatus in promoting gender stereotypes to assert their roles, which leads to shape the general belief and ideology of a society. Media constructs as well as has the control to obliterate gender image. It carefully targets the audience according to the time, space, and age. It has become the most easily accessible tool in electronic sphere as well as print. It creates, reflects, and enforces attitudes. Many magazines and digests are singled out for a romantic and ideal portrayal of females to influence minds of the young girls compelling them to visualize an ideal and fantastic world hardly existing in reality. Stories in digests create an environment in which adult females feel elevated and imagine themselves to be a part of it. Such powerful descriptions of environment, beauty, clothes, and luxurious life altogether forces females to a romantic aura and they refuse the reality. Media reinforces these attitudes and conventional identities are promulgated to find appreciation from the females.

The present investigation aims to highlight stereotypical representation of females in fiction. Each selected story spheres a main female figure set in an educational environment. The protagonists are college girls, which reflect the target readers are adult womenfolk. All the four stories revolve around romance tempting the special target audience to be greatly stimulated by a utopian romantic world. Central idea of physical beauty is overriding the themes of these stories portraying the female protagonist as beautiful and the male handsome. The study critically analyzes the selected stories "Khwahishun ki Musaftain" by Rimsh Khalid *Khwateen Digest* (Feb 2011, p.198), "Mehr Meeran" by Sumera Hameed *Khwateen Digest* (June 2018. p. 68),"Shab-e-Arzoo ka Aalam" by Sundus Jabeenn *Shuaa Digest* (Feb 2011, p. 68),"Teri Ik Nigah k Aseer" by Nadia Ahmed *Shuaa Digest* (July 2018, p. 148). Four editions of Urdu digests spanning between decades are considered to argue that years have not been successful in changing the gender perspective within Pakistani social context. Short stories are critically analyzed for their language and themes to expose the implied message in the discursive practices of females recreating their identities as typically feminine and submissive.

The study is significant to illustrate the conventional representation assigned to female characters in Urdu Digest stories for years. Unfortunately Urdu digests have failed to gain much attention from the researchers although much has been worked and examined on stereotypical representation of females as far the other media are concerned such as dramas, movies, advertisements, fairytales etc. This study will invoke an interest among the readers not merely to read these stories for pleasure but consider the implied agenda of targeting woman by showing her

a tool of pleasure and dependent on man. The study unravels the patriarchal notions imbedded deeply in our society without a change being observed for years.

Highly compassionate and romantic in nature, these stories are written in elevated metaphorical language merely directed the females to hold certain typical roles thus, claiming their rights and desire for progress as a unique and individual entity.

A conventional society such as Pakistan always undermines the role of women. Women in Pakistani society are perceived as domestic beings, raised to marry and rear a family. Literature has also been singled out to represent women as an object of sensuous pleasure such as Urdu monthly digests. Adult women with basic education rarely join any profession and find solace in fictional narratives and digest stories. They internalize their domestic role as duty bound dependent on fathers, brothers, and husbands. The dependence from their father to husband implies more control on part of men in comparison to reliance. The study questions reinforcement of the stereotype representation of Pakistani woman through exaggeration and subversion in Urdu Digest stories perceiving her to be an ideally good girl, unequivocally beautiful, kind, and compassionate. It also evaluates the role of the female protagonists in the digest stories being elevated through highly imaginative and metaphorical language.

NAÏVE AND DEPENDENT
Female protagonists in the Urdu digest stories are depicted as naïve and dependent on their male counterparts. They are represented within their close connection to domestic roles, to nurture a family as a life goal. The stories denote an agenda to dominate the females assigning them conventional domestic roles. Narrative writers emphasize role change of these women only from their dependence on their fathers to husbands after matrimony.

Western researchers pointed out inclination of the young girls to Disney Princess (Wohlwend, 2009). Young girls adopt popular media narratives with enthusiasm, which elucidates the notion of productive consumption. Moreover, imagining themselves to be the princesses they produce their own counter- narratives within their societal boundaries.

Researchers have also highlighted the role of media being very influential in promoting gender and racial stereotypes. Gunter (2008) explored the fundamental role of media in creating an effective impact on the attitudes, values, and behaviors of the audience. By creating stereotypes and the representation of impossible images, media affects the viewers negatively in the sense that it amplifies the portrayals when are not compatible to meet media's standards of what appears normal and natural. Normal and natural is distorted to achieve the required objectives. Urdu digest, though a popular print medium requires the attention of masses in constructing and promoting conventional ideologies associated to feminine beauty.

Marwich (2006) defined 'physical beauty' more explicitly as which immediately excited most of the opposite sex. By this definition, we may understand the magnetism that physical beauty captures and females are often objectified as an 'item' of sensuous pleasure, which defines the sole purpose of their existence.

Kaystone (2004) highlighted the value of fairy tales in adult literature. She took a heroine's journey through the kingdom of traditional folkloristic. Further, Kaystones (2009) described "heroines are not allowed to any defect, nor are they required to develop, since they are already perfect." In her article, she argued that despite of wide appeal of Disney's heroines, they received inadequate scholarly discussion. Hungarian folktales 'exclude [d]' numerous heroines on the basis that they resembled much the same all the way through Europe (Degh, 1974). Those tales mostly depicted heroines going through violence; almost forty heroines out of more than two hundred tales were abused.

Works of Kaystone clearly reflect female representation in fairytales as a matter of depressing discussions. Female character has been assigned status of elevated creature as for her physical beauty is concerned. Much is exhausted by the writers to show her an object of elegance and pleasure.

Chris (2007) argues that woman is competing in a male dominated society. They undergo the strain to legitimatize their position. He further argues the facilitation of stereotype simple minded, poignant, and domestic women in popular culture, an image that has been reinforced for years through various media techniques such as movies, cartoons, magazines and television. Chris (2007) discussed that 'representation of women as dim-witted shoppers and purely domestic have been internalized within the popular culture' long before 21st century. It was long before electronic media that the role of woman had been portrayed in newspapers and magazines to limit her to household. Chris (2007) further highlights role of women presenting themselves better entrepreneurs in the business spheres. Women entrepreneurs in Pennsylvania have a strong contribution in the economy of the State. Regardless of a stereotypical image, these women desired to succeed for a better life. Chris (2007) is hopeful in viewing positivity in stereotypes which are significant within everyday life of third world regions. Though an accepted norm, stereotypes may alter or completely disappear for the reason that women are attempting to find a balance to gain recognition.

Kasey (2005) explored 'the socio-cultural standards of feminine beauty' that existed in approximately all popular media stagnating women with the images of ideal beauty. Mass Media has been creating such images to reinforce the stereotype representations given to a female since decades. Majority of the models are presented as ideals with slim, thin figures incorporating the idea that in order to be beautiful the women must be underweight. Media of all sorts is spreading these kinds of implicit and explicit messages largely affecting the young minds. Media portrayal of women often creates negative influence on the way women view themselves. According to the research, the social comparison theory looks at how individuals assess themselves in relation to peers, groups, and society (Milkie1999). Individuals compare themselves on various dimensions with others who look identical to them. Mass Media in this regard is seen to be the highly influential and controlling source. The study further refers to 'Self– Schema Theory' and discusses it founded on constructing perception about women appearance with reference to three points; the socially represented ideal body, the objective body and the internalized ideal body (Milkie1999). Socially represented body is portrayed by the media and other important individuals in the person's life. The person evaluates his/her own objective body by his / her personal satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Internalized mage is the ideal image endorsed by the person and he / she tries to achieve it in spite of the fact that images created by media are most often comprehended negatively. Media seems to be unyielding and continues with advertising images of ideal

beauty through electronic and print resources which are affecting the females and especially adults are attracted to follow its foot prints towards attaining the impossible and unrealistic ideals.

In 21st century world has moved towards a change extraordinarily. One thing that has not changed significantly is the patriarchal status of our society (Karpinskaia, 2012). It is presumably true of Pakistani culture and society.

In patriarchal societies certain adjectives have been associated with genders especially women are discussed as more emotional and stoic in contrast to sensible and passionate men. The difference in meaning between sex and gender has extensively contributed to the gendered system which instead of considering both terms in their origin as referring to biological terms, takes these in their social values airing the dominance of one gender to another. Gender is considered within the parameters of society and is based on the societal norms. It refers to the culturally constructed difference between men and women. Karipinskaia (2012) discusses this sex based grouping leading to gender stereotyping that generalizes and objectifies the roles of men and women. Women are easily identifiable in media because of their distinguished physical and cultural characteristics. Media sends the message that ultimately women must make a choice between being powerful and or being woman having a healthy family relationship and rational state of mind. Novel cultural trend broadcast in dramas encourage adults to adapt these trends consequently meeting numerous problems. The present study, however, is concerned about media based projections of cultural stereotypes.

Patel (2008) argues that fairy tales have passed down to generations highlighting a female character in the parole of a fairy possessing the models of beauty and modesty. The question arises whether these are merely stories told to the readers for entertainment or carries some specific agenda. Almost every story offers the reader to live up to finding a good husband and making a prosperous family. The researcher also observes how these stereotypical female images are incorporated through these tales. These details describe the heroin as an embodiment of beauty, modesty, and values. She is an ideally compassionate girl embodying the formulaic characteristics of females such as love, devotion, kindness, obedience taking the burdens to her. Frequent portrayals of women as naïve and foolish and at the end meeting a godly figure who shoulders her and gives her surety of happy future appears to be a norm of fictional narratives. However, the image of the female has progressively changed as adult girls are enthusiastic to join professions instead of domesticating themselves except conventional patriarchal societies. Moreover, to illuminate the active role of the females has become the primary concern and obligation as far gender studies are concerned to make the new gender roles functional. Considered unnamed, Pakistan woman is represented by Media a victim of patriarchy (Mughal, 2011)

Matyas (2010) argues about the role of media and its possible influence on viewers through language. She accentuates direct impact of the messages transmitted through media upon the value system of the viewers. It is this pervasiveness that media is recognized to play a pivotal role in our lives. Media plays a vital role in instructing the young people particularly (Rosefield 1991). It uses its influential position in developing the attitudes, values and behaviors of the audience. Usually adult minds are more vulnerable to be influenced. The researcher alleges the Walt Disney Company for adhering to themes commonly found in the films i.e. the representation of race and gender. She proposes to

achieve an in-depth look at the gender and racial stereotypes embedded within each film. The stereotyping tendencies are prevailing in the world in general, specifically focusing the female characters.

Byrant (2009) returned to 'a pre feminist idea' when he discussed the conviction of the happy women who found contentment in 'nurturing'; when unmarried life appeared as the most horrible thing happening to a woman. Masculinity symbolizes power. It is mainly that vigor and financial power, which determine the patriarchal value of males in a society. Conventional ideas of 'maleness' constitute the ideals of masculinity. Women are subordinates whereas men are conferred upon power and assertiveness as their foremost characteristics. Viewing this in Pakistani context, one can well imagine how females are constantly made in to believe through different media that they are dependent on males for their survival and their destination is to find a good match, get married and live happily after.

Thus, Media's accessibility affects people's opinions and understanding for various issues (Hazell & Clarks, 2005). It is media, which directs social understanding of the 'general public' and suggests what the collective societal beliefs should be (Hazell & Clarke, 2005).

Research has proved media as an influential instrument in fostering gender and racial stereotypes (Gunter, 2009). Individuals adopt 'gender and racial characteristics' by controlling the reward and consequences related to media (Marwich, 2006). The images and texts could be seen in general becoming a significant component of the culture of any society and provides the basis for more stereotypes to be constructed (Hazell & Clarke, 2005). Media's stereotypical depiction of race and gender leads unto developing an automatic cycle where these 'representation[s]' appear a norm.

The present study is conducted through qualitative research method which is exploratory in nature, discovering objects and phenomena in their natural settings and study to comprehend through interpretation the meanings people associate with them (Denzin 1994). The present study has found the method adequately conforming to the research statements.

For the study, a working model of gendered discursive practices in relation to textbooks by J.Sunderland (2002) has been adapted partially and further modified to conform to the objectives of the study as it was originally created for teacher's talk around the text. 'Maintaining the traditional representation of gender roles' was focused for the present research to examine the stereotype projection of women in Urdu digests in 2011 and 2018 editions. Gendered Text Model (Sunderland 2002) helped in the interpretation of the text, and proposed explanations of causes or influences. The model provided complex and comprehensive conceptual understanding of things that could not have been pinned down otherwise such as the attitudes of the heroines and their relationship to other characters in the stories.

Diverse contexts arise in the text but the study is focused on particular individuals and concepts taken from the Sunderland Model (2002). The answer to the research question stems from the study of these individuals in their specific social setting at a specific time.

'GOOD AT HEART' PORTRAYALS OF WOMEN

Female roles in these stories can be described to have acquired polarity in a hardening opposition to males. Female protagonists in all the four stories are the focus of attention. They are idealized as 'good at heart'. They are naïve in some respects. It can be observed that the protagonists are depicted as ignorant and this ignorance turns out to be a blessing for them at the end by surrendering to men. They are not shown as clever and ambitious. They do not find their way-out of situations but wait for others (most dominantly men) to accumulate them. The effect of these stories on females is well documented. Since decades, these stories have gained great popularity. Leading role of the females has been emulated to be presented to the generations of girls and young women. Popular media shows the standards of female beauty which projects woman as an embodiment of ideal beauty almost unattainable although most desirable.

The analysis of the selected digest stories gets larger inspiration from the titles, which bear a significant implied notion anticipating what is to be encounter in the narratives. Linguistic choice of the titles also emphasizes its predominately gendered perspective. The titles connote romantic tones making sensuous appeal to the female readers particularly. If we critically look at the language used in these titles, these seem to provoke desires and enthusiasm for an admirable life style reliant on men. The themes of marraiage ,love and household dominating the narratives influence young female readers, who in their teen age hold an aura of romance, breathing in a utopian world.

The title of the first story "Khuwahishun ki Musafat" (*Khwateen*, 2011, p.198) indicates a long journey of desires whereas the second one Shab-e-Arzoo (Shuaa, 2011, p.68) signifies a night full of longings which turn out to be a pledge for happy life. What really attracts the readers in the stories is the appearance of the heroines. The opening scenes conform to the idea of an ideally beautiful girl the readers are introduced to. The selected stories start with a powerful language of the setting to move towards the introduction of the heroines.

"Palm or Molesry k darakhtun se ghri huee do roya pagdandi …us k bal us ki dosheezgi ka raz na khol dety."(*Shua*, 2011 p.66)
"Syah mehraab ki taraf barhty huy us ne sar utha kr purshakuh or buland u bala imarat ko dheka" (*Shuaa, 2018,* p. 146).
"Havielee ke chobary se seerian phalangti phatak uboor karti niklee" (Khwateen, 2018, p. 168).
"Rat bohut gehri thi.sitaroon k ghubar k pas chamakty taroon ko dekh kar yun lagta tha jesy aasmanon k taqchun main dye timtimarahe hu." (*Khwateen*, 2011, p.198)

The narratives do not 'challenge sexual and gender stereotypes or those about romance and true love, but instead reinforces them' (Michael, 2003). Since romance, love and sex are generally considered as 'personal/private parts of our lives, this leads to the patriarchal concept where females are overtly associated as being the instruments of beauty, love and romance. Both the stories are a rich depiction of highly romantic descriptions encouraging the teenager college students as both the stories are set in the context of college and hostel life.

The stories taken from digests issues of 2011 reflect 'gender roles are constructed of a combination of traditional roots and social values in Pakistan', (Zaman, 2006, p. 428), principally founded on the conventional notions of production and reproduction. The situation mirrors masculine and feminine traits attributed to individuals in a conservative society.

In the first story "Shab-e Aarzoo" taken from *Shuaa Digest*, Abrish the female protagonist represents a young college student whereas the second story "Khwahishon Ki Musafatain" from *Khwateen Digest* is about Sila, its female protagonist, representing a college student lives in hostel. The narratives set in the context of college in both the stories use highly romanticized and elevated metaphorical language to build a romantic edifice of the environment.

"Ye us ka hujla-e- uroosi tha.sufaid lily or surkh gulabon se saja kamra behad shandar tha" (*Shuaa*, 2011, p.78). The image demonstrates the setting surrounded by lilies and red roses in full bloom.

Description of weather also romanticizes the general atmosphere of the narratives. It gives an aura of fantasy to the situation in an idealized, unrealistic fashion, making it appear better or more appealing than it really is.

…Gulabi jarun ka mosam tha .Ak dhundli subah wo tyar ho rahi thee…(*Shuaa*, 2011, p.80)
…Sila lab k samny waly lawn main sufaid gulabun k kunj k pas bethi thi…(*Khwateen* p.202)
…Gol satunun par charhi belain phoolun se ladi theen…(*Khwateen* p.204)

Use of metaphorical language elevates emotions. Language being an effective and easily accessible tool to represent social issues and readers are more likely to accept these when they read and interpret according to their perception.

Further, the narrative shifts to the ideal physical description of the female protagonist, which forms sensuous and extremely appealing images in readers' minds.

"Makhruti hath,Khubsoorat sunehri ball

 Halki gulabi rangat,muri huee palkain" (*Shuaa* p.74)
 "Ghungryaly balun ka gucha banaty,ankhein malty neend k khumar main jhoom rahi thi.sham ko jo kajal dala tha…sabz frok par sabz or peely rangun ki khubsoorat chunri odhy,halki gulabi lipstick lagay (*Khwateen* p.210)

For the female protagonists of the narratives, romance indicates their desirability and the successful ending of the stories keeps the desire open for the readers. The female characters are shown as passive and submissive; complying with their male counter parts and the image has been reinforced by the narrative style. The narratives subvert their roles showing them active and bold during hostel life yet acquiescent when confronting men. Female protagonists of these digest stories have been much the same throughout many years. They have been given a lofty status as for their physical beauty and character is concerned. The narratives place a great deal of emphasis to prove the female characters objects of sensuality, modishness, and elegance. Pure product of a Pakistani Patriarchal society, their goal of life is to get married and rear the children.

As a common factor, women have always been regarded lower in status than men. Social constructionists Wood & Eagly (2002) considered social gender construction "hierarchical and characterized in a male advantaged gender hierarchy". For the purpose females have been objectified as a source of pleasure. Female representation in national and local literature is enriched by descriptions

of self-beautification. Scenes are intentionally depicted in these stories where the protagonist looks at her reflection in the mirror and praises her own beauty implying how very much she is in love with her own image and consider it as an inspiration for the spectators.

"Sada lawn ka suit, sunehri baal or saaf shafaf sa chehra ,wo kitni mukhtalif lag rahi thi" (*Shuaa,* 2011, p.212).
"Pindaal ki roshnee ka aks us ke chehry ko roshan kr raha tha" (Shuaa, 2018, p.160).
"Balun ko sukhatey Sila aaeeny main baghor apna jaiza ley rahee thi.sada siyah chooridar pajama or chooridar asteenon wali ghutnon tak ati shirt siya shirt par bilkul sada surkh dopata us ki gulabi saf rangat pe bohut khil raha tha"(*Khwateen*, 2011, p. 205).

Thoughts which occupy the minds of the protagonists watching their reflections illustrate that they are possessed by a narcissist attitude, holding their beauty and honour in high esteem, which male protagonists shake at the end. The self appraisal conforms to the thought that female protagonists are not allowed any defects, nor any development is required since they are already perfect (Kaystone, 2004). The significant aspect is that the narratives position them within a setting easily identifiable by common readers. It thus, denotes the narrative technique of the text maintains a traditional representation (Sunderland 2002) of gender roles, man being socially dominant and women being dependent and in need of social security and bondage. For decades role of the female is interpreted within the idioms of domesticity and dependency.

In representing the stereotypical role of a female, the writers ignore sometimes the traditional role to mystify and make it ambiguous for the readers (Sunderland 2002). This is particularly traced by observing the discursive practices the characters are involved. Female protagonists, no matter belonging to middle class families are bold, carefree, and dominating among the group. They follow and support a distinct philosophy about life.

"Mery liye sab se zaroori hey dosti or apni zat ka atbar" (*Khwateen* 2011, p.204)
"Us k baba us ki har khwahish o zid poori karty they .Jwaban unhun ne ak hi cheez ka ikhtyar manga tha or wo tha shadi.Abrish ne un ka faisla man lya tha" (*Shuaa* 2011, p.71).

 They belong to conservative families as for their marital relationships are concerned. Each of them is ready to fall easily "into the classic trap of Pakistani marriage" (Durrani, 1994).

Apart from their distinct bold attitudes, they are portrayed as strictly clinging to the eastern family traditions, full of concern for their close relations. Home environment shows a typical and traditional depiction where a loving mother is prepared to sacrifice for the children. Since the target audience is the middle class teenagers, they easily identify themselves, their home, environments, situation and with the characters of these stories.

It can be easily discerned from these stories that no female character aims for a working professional life, be it the parents or the protagonist herself. Hostel life displays a carefree life of hardworking students but a role has been defined for them to get over with the exams and get married finally. Marriage factor has always been fore grounded as a social norm and the ultimate end of a contented

and prosperous life. While doing so, the narratives "subverts" that is challenges the traditional role of the females by presenting them as rebellion in nature during their academic lives yet making it unclear if the change should be accepted by their families and society (Sunderland 2002). Within the perspective of the norms of traditional patriarchal society, the characters are shown complying with the traditions by limiting their freedom within the social structure.

Relationship of woman with man in Pakistani society has always remained debatable. The narratives also focus a conventional image of man who proves himself as an ideal protector of the females socially as well as economically.

Thought patterns and social structure intrude the readers' minds defining females as subordinates, dependent and emotionally weak creatures. Female protagonist likely meets a 'demigod' in an inadvertent encounter to whom she surrenders her ego and lives happily according to his desires. Normally, the narratives introduce such encounters initiated by a friend or a cousin who encourages the reader to meet same co-incidences and opportunities in their surrounding thus largely depending upon their friends and cousins waiting for a miracle to happen.

"Ye Sila hey ,meri cousin…wo purshoq nazroon se syah chadar k haly main damakta us ka chehra dekh raha tha" (*Khwateen* p.210). The introduction emphasizes the physical beauty of the protagonist and desirability of male protagonist. It also connotes gaze of man appreciating feminine beauty. The description instigates objectification of woman in Urdu narratives. While making a relationship, the male protagonist is in direct, however, a careless contact with the female and it eventually leads to an intimate one.

"Wo chadar theek karti us ki simt barhi…Zain ne us par sard nigah dalee or spot lehjy main bola" (*Shuaa*, 2011, p.69). Wrapped in "chaddar" that is a traditional piece of cloth taken by females for body covering, the female appears prototype of piety and conventionalism. If a blood relation, the female protagonist is in a direct, however, casual contact with the male which also ends up in eternal love. Female protagonist is shown egoistic subverting that is challenging traditional norms, but male breaks the ice who claims to bring a change in her life and she happily succumbs.

Exaggeration is another technique where the narratives appear to deviate from the traditional role of the females and is introduced to male characters in tempting wedding scenes. It implies the context added to associate conventional meaning to define role of the females in Pakistani society and refuses to compromise on the physical beauty of the females.

"Khubsoorat-o-deedazeb uroosi libas main wo behad haseen lag rahi thi .moum ki guria jis ki saj dhaj dekhney se taluq rakhti thi" (*Shuaa*, 2011, p.77). Description of beautiful clothes adds charms to the physical features.
"Goty kinari se sajy froc par sabz or peely rangun ki khubsoorat chunree orhne k bad balun ko catcher main qaid kar k peechy khula chor dya.Halki gulabi lipstick laga kar kajal se aankain sanwareen (*Khwateen*, 2011, p.210).

Taking a critical look at the female depiction in 2018 digest narratives, a similar image is fore- grounded that was emphasized decade before. Expressions are used to define the female protagonist as pious and beautiful. "Sufaid duppaty se chehry ko chupaati" (Khwateen, 2018, p. 168). The narrative though depict a prostitute, however she is shown as pure by heart and innocent trapped in an

undesirable environment. She is exploited by men at every step, however, she succumbs to her situation. The second narrative from *Shuaa* digest (2018) depicts the protagonist in extremely alluring and traditional clothes. "surkh muqiash ka kurta and humrang choorian" (p.148) presents her as a "princess". Another carefree yet conventional character, Sila touches the heights of elegance and liveliness reminding the reader of sensuality and appeal an eastern woman carries. It suggests how the narratives for years have been encouraging exaggerated portrayals of beauty and elegance. Conventional picture of the male protagonist is frequently fore-grounded to demean the role of female characters (*Khwateen, Shuaa*, 2018).

The descriptions are made even stronger by an appraisal of the male protagonist to make the female conscious of her beauty. She becomes the focus of attention because of her traditional attire and "inner" simplicity, detected only by a "mardam shanas", the male protagonist. The attire follows eastern values set as symbols of real beauty in these narratives and the female protagonist adheres to these religiously because she is an innocent soul living life within the cultural boundaries. Here the descriptions appear to be endorsed what Sunderland called exaggerated in her model showing the discursive powers in the society creating ideologies and constructing identities (2002). The narratives thus re-enact stereotypical representation through discursive practices.

Context is relevant to linguistics for understanding conventional beliefs and relationships of a society. Decade long representation of females in Pakistani Urdu digests emphasizes domestic goals set for women by the male family members. Though analysis of a text cannot do more than suggesting how it may be interpreted or responded to. The study of meaning in the text alone must always be insufficient (Sunderland 2002).Contextual study makes it worthy to understand what the narratives attempt to convey, who are the target audience and what are the institutional practices observed in the society. Females are the target in such literature, which shows what the institutional practices are in a patriarchal society. Reinforcement of traditional images restrains females to the boundaries of the house and shows their dependence on males. It is media which creates, reflects, and enforces attitudes in society. Magazines and readers are contributing a lot in gender stereotyping, affecting the minds of the readers, and distracting them towards an ideal and fantastic world distant from the practicality and reality. High romantic and grand images create a utopian sensation among the readers.

Analysis of the last scenes of the selected stories points out the implied concept of how females feel insecure and weak until they are guarded with care and protection by males.

"Do anso besakhta us ki palkun se tooty or mah o sal ki thakan un main ghul kar utartee chali gayee" (*Khwateen*, 2011, p.230). Cowardice and dependence of female on male is illustrated by tears as ever.
"Abrish ka dil phool ki tarah khila hua tha .us k ander skoon utarta chal gya" (Shuaa, 2011, p, 87).

Use of Urdu verbs in the above illustrations indicates satisfaction as a continuous process acquired only in obeying and yielding to a man. A female is eager to listen to the surety and pledge revived by her husband giving her guarantee of being socially strong.

Linguistic choices in the narratives augment and exaggerate the innocence of the female characters who find solace in the arms of males. Following illustrations well portray the situation.

"Sarey ghao ak jumly ki sachaee ne bhar daly they.Saleh ne bohut narmi se us k ansoo punchy" *Khwateen*, 2011, p.231).
"use laga us ki rooh tareeki main beh kr nikhar gaee hai. Apnee hatalee se geeli ankain ponch ke Zyam ko dekha" (*Khwateen*, 2018, p.196).
"Zain ki ankoon main sachi chahat k dye roshan they.us ki walehana chahat Abrish ko ak khubsurat zindagi ki naveed dey rahey they" (*Shuaa* 2011, p.87).
Tabraiz ne khud ko pursakun mehsoos kia. Sila ko laga jesy sadyun ki yhakan us aik pal main rukhsat huee thi" (*Shuaa*, 2018, p. 193).

Interestingly, female characters are addressed by expression, which are likely found in all the four stories. Like clichés, almost all the stories are decorated with sensuous and appealing adjectives such as "Moumi sanchy main dhala husan, Moum ki guria" wax is a generally terminology used in East for female physical beauty and soft touch. "Jhilmilati rangat", "Tamtamai rangat" (glaring complexion), "Halki gulabi rangat" (pink complexion), "Sogwar husan" (sad beauty), "Mughlia shehzadi" (Mughul princess), "Qandhari anar ki tarah surkh hota chehra" (red complexion like pomegranate).

The narratives endorse the traditional stereotypical representation of females merely to attract the readers and their intention is to enforce notion of womanhood as tool of sensuous pleasure and appeal. Perception of women being talkative has also been reinforced, conforming to the notions; "the tongue is babbling, but the head knows nothing about it", explains Russian proverb.

Females are shown brilliant academically; they are rarely shown in any professions. Female writings imply what institutional practices are. They assign female role of objects meant to accomplish household activities as she is represented being capable of carrying out domestic responsibilities alone .

CONCLUSION
Femininity is portrayed as an entity, when female characters are exhibited and desired, instead of being autonomous individual protagonists defined as "defect-less" (Kaystone, 2002). Digests foreground female stereotypes reinforcing her image as one-dimensional. Media has a role to play in advancing such a strategy. Gender roles and various expressions of serious gender inequalities present in Pakistani conforms to the model (Sunderland 2002) adopted and agrees that texts are working and developing description of females and the narratives maintain the traditional representation by 'subverting' and 'endorsing' it leading towards a fairy tale end created by Disney with the notion of 'living happily ever after' (Kaystone, 2004). Linguistic choice is loaded with high metaphors generate provocative feelings and immature teen agers are easy victim to it. The study findings endorse that woman portrayed in Pakistani Urdu digests is an object of pleasure and beauty whose is destined for marriage and shelter by man. The idea has continually been reaffirmed throughout the stories that marrying after intermediate or graduation is advantageous and recommended rather than getting into a profession. Frequently occurring storyline encourages readers to consider 'true love leading to marriage or attained after marriage' is the eventual resolution of happiness. The narratives ideally suggest a female should change over their dependence on father to husband revealing the intentional desire through reinforcement that females must not make independent decision and the

narrative (texts) endorse the opinion to comply the argument. Female representation is stereotypical; however, exaggeration and subversion as techniques elevate their conventional roles. Unfortunately, due to social structures, these narratives adhere to the traditional norms by bringing back fictional characters within the social constraints. The idea of woman being ideal but helpless and dependent runs through the stories incessantly. The study provides future perspectives by suggesting an investigation whether reinforcement of stereotype female representation is undertaken intentionally as the stories are written by female writers. The change in perspective during ten years can also be investigated over a longer period of time.

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