

## **Status of women in the Baloch society**

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### **Abstract**

*The Baloch women, constitute like any other social group, about half of population. The Baloch women, as well in all communities, are more illiterate than men. Like other social groups, the Baloch women share problem related reproductive health. When primary and secondary subsistence activities are counted, women work more than men. The connectional framework to analyse women's status comprise the seven roles women play in life and work:- parental, conjugal, domestic, kin, occupational, community and as an individual. In order to appraise the social status of women in these diverse ecological areas, the findings have been divided into subsequent categories:- (a) a girl; daughter, (b) mother, (c) married women and (d) common women. Role of women not only of importance economic activities, but her role in non-economic activities is equally important. The Baloch women work very hard, in some cases even more than men. However, in their own world women have a freedom, and self-expression. With the onset of developmental programmes economic changes are take place but Baloch women remains traditional in their dress, language, tools and resources. The Baloch women play very important and historical role in the field of politics, social, economy, literature, health etc. The structure of the society is being changing due to emerging the Baloch people from nomadic to semi-nomadic and agro-pastoral. Modernization is bringing changes, which affect man and women differently. The rapid changes and modernization in the structure of society not only bringing positive impacts but it is affecting and damaging constructive values, traditions and norms, prevails in Baloch society from the centuries, which are badly affecting the respect, honour and dignity of women. There is need of incorporation and promotion of constructive values, traditions and norms with recent rapid changes, revival of positive aspects and protection of the status women in the light of historical role and importance of women.*

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### **Introduction**

Baloch as a nation historically belongs to nomadic, semi-nomadic and a pastoral life style. They used to raise livestock as primary enterprise for their livelihoods, so the migration from highland to lowland was a permanent phenomenon in search of fodder for their animals. Their existence is based on collective, mutual interests, and losses. Baloch people have their own characteristics; like any other nation in terms of art, music, morals, and customs. Baloch have it own unique language and identity. Although Baloch have a history of a nomadic way of life but with the passage of time they in transitory process in settling themselves in modern life. Adoption of modern life influenced their norms and culture as they merge in a new society. However, educated and middle class generations carrying their own norms and values. Historically and socially Baloch belong to a secular school of thoughts. Hospitality is one of the best virtues among Baloch people. For instance, when an enemy entered in their house or huts for seeking protection, they are bound to give them protection and treat them with honor. There are many such stories in Baloch history; they gave the protection of their enemies. For hospitality, Baloch nomads, a century ago, has a separate tent for their guest and those whom are well off they have guest houses in Balochistan. Baloch poetry is one of the most beautiful poetry and one of the oldest in the World. In Baloch culture poetry has always been combined with music. Balochi music and folklore has been passed from generation to generation as a valuable art. Balochi handicrafts are world-renowned – be it Baloch carpets and rugs or embroidery. The Baloch are very hospitable, nice and friendly. They are generally intelligent, learned, well-informed, initiated, cultivated, socially accomplished and politically attentive. Culturally, they are rich and self-dependent.

Regardless of being a tribal society, Baloch consider their women as full partners. Baloch women have always played a major role being housewife, working in agriculture field for centuries during the cultivation period - nomadic women can help graze the flocks and much more. Women take care of feeding the livestock,

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cleaning the abodes and even in providing traditional care of diseases. They further involved in milking and milking process, poultry, and egg selling. Women have significant role in the development of livestock sector in Balochistan (**Shafiq, M., 2008**). Baloch women have helped their men during the war by treating their injuries and providing support in many ways. For centuries, Baloch do not have any segregation of sexes nor did they have veil in nomadic life. On the other hand, as respect of women in Baloch society, if she interferes during tribal feuds between two warring tribes - both parties will stop fighting. Baloch women have taken the responsibility of teaching their children moral principle and values. Particularly, killing women in Baloch culture is considered covertness. The role of Baloch women through history is of times oversimplified and misinterpreted through the lens of recent history for which there are far more records. A number of examples are on the record of our history where women have been assisted the rulers in their affairs or have exhibited tremendous intellectual efforts for the reform and betterment of the society.

Respect of mother and sister is mandatory in Baloch society. In old age, special care provided to mother. I personally observed that when old mother is sick, her son takes it in his hands. Her words never been ignored. In the tribes status of mother and wife of tribal chief is high. Tribal men have any complain against his chief then he approach the mother and wife of tribal chief then they try to provide justice to him. Baloch women are loyal to her husband. If her husband was killed, then she trained and asks her son for revenge (**Shah, 2008**).

In the sixteenth century the Portuguese invaded Persian Gulf region, including the Baloch coast of Makran. Mir Hamal Jiand, a chief of Kalmat in the Makran resisted against them and finally arrested by them and they offered to marry with European girl. He refused to do so and he loves his native girls. Baloch poetess Bibi Khanun expresses his view about difference of Baloch and European girl, in her poetry (**Naseer, 1976**):

On the score that they do not wash their eyes,

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Nor pronounce the name of God;  
 They devour handfuls of dates with flies,  
 Their shirts are cut above the knees,  
 And the naval is exposed to view I;  
 Neither their address to God is decent,  
 Nor (do they) recite the Muslim way prayer;  
 Hamal loves his native girls having intoxicating eyes,  
 They wear shirts and trousers,  
 And cover their heads with shawls.

Before starting a discussion or any generalization of the role of Women in Baloch society, it is important to know the factors that help in interpreting the status that they enjoy in their own family.

### **Cultural Background**

A woman life sphere consists of child to motherhood. These all stages have been discussed in the following chapter to give better understanding to the readers.

### **Girl Child**

Girl child in Baloch tribe is called "*Janekh*" or *Neyanrin*". Baloch too have son preference but don not discriminate against girls by female infanticide or sex determination tests. The elder sister is like mother where as they have love and respect for younger brother and sisters. Boys and girls don't have similar inheritance laws. Baloch women do not have similar inherit land, except in matrilineal societies or under special circumstances. Nonetheless they are not abused, hated, or subjected to strict social norms. Girls are free to participate in social events, dancing and other family recreational programmes. Girls are not considered as burden because of their economic value. There is no dowry on marriage. However in some

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areas father of bridegroom pay a bride price in the shape of *Lab* to the father of girl. When there is a marriage by exchange, in which

brother and sister in the family may marry a sister and brother belonging to other family, no bride price is paid. Girls care for younger siblings, perform household jobs and work in the fields with their brothers. The girls are trained to be good housewives and motherhood, together with behavioral pattern that are consistence with obedience, being ladylike and expected passive. A song sung by girl playing the game ( **Dames, 1988**).

The girls call you (so-and-so) to come close pleasant Gumbaz  
 (so-and-so) will not come, girls.  
 She is busy in needful work.  
 She is sewing her brother's trousers.  
 She is sewing her father's coat.  
 She is making a peg for her uncle's bow.  
 She is embroidering a bodice for her mother.  
 She is making a close-fitting jacket for herself.

The education is a fundamental right that provides opportunities for socio-economic uplift. The girl child is deliberately denied and the future opportunity of to all development. The reasons associated with not educating girl child are financial constraints, early marriages, submissiveness, motherhood, and parental perception of education on women's worldview. In absence of hired labour the girls, work at home and fields is of utmost importance and all considered the fact that eventually the girls have to get married and start their families. Where parents are enthusiastic about educating their daughters, they enroll their daughters in school but rarely allow them to complete their schooling. The grills study up to primary or middle level and get married. Sometimes girls are withdrawn from school after three or four years (when they have learned to write their names and able to read letter) to work, with

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preference for education given to boys. There is major gender disparity, in terms of more limited educational opportunities available for rural girls. Urban girls probably have benefited most from increased access to educational facilities.

#### **Married Women**

In Balochi, the wife called as “*Banokh, Loghi, Halkh* and *Khad*. Baloch behave to their wife well. Married women in the study of area carryout all types of work at home as well as outside that are required of mixed agro-pastoral economy. Apart from looking after the house, children and cattle, major portion of the agriculture is done by women who do planting, weeding, hoeing and harvesting and other indigenous *Kasheedakari*. Child rearing is also the responsibility of the women. There was dowry on marriage in tribal system but with the passage of time and spreading out of education in the society, the dowry system is discouraged. However in some areas father of bridegroom pay a bride price in the shape of *Lab* to the father of girl. Basically lab was to provide the social security to the girl. The parents of girl return back the money in shape of cloths, ornaments and other household items. However, exchange marriage is still prevailing in which brother and sister in the family may marry a sister and brother belonging to other family, no bride price is paid.

In the study of society monogamous, polygamous and polyandrous marriages are prevalent. There may be premature death, marital discard or infertility that threatens family continuation. Among some communities, it is socially expected and considered desirable that after to the death of her husband a women should marry her brother-in-law, but the women has the final say and she have right to refuse. She has also choice to marry any other person but mostly observed that she look after her kids and live with family of her late husband.

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Divorce is uncommon among the Baloch society but practiced in urban areas and lower classes among whom it is given on trivial grounds, but seldom in the case of the dominant races. Both husband and wife possess the right of divorce. If the women desires divorce she loses her dower; if husband divorces her pay the “deferred *haqmaher*” amount (**District Gazetteers, 2004**).

**Mother**

Mother also plays a critical role in career building of her child, as mother best knows the capabilities, strengths and weaknesses in her kids and can better guide her children to choose the right profession. Mothers are the one who mould their children into bright, beautiful, pure and strong citizens. Mother in Baloch society is called “*Mazh or mat*”. Baloch mother have taken the responsibility of teaching their children moral principle and values. Through lullabies (*loly*), she teaches his son(s) and daughter(s) about the culture and tribal norms of life. In domestic affairs, the value of mother is as a king. Mother in Baloch society have strong hold decision making in the family affairs i.e. marriage of girls and boys. The son respects his mother a lot. Every kind of work is done by the advice of mother. If mother and wife quarrel, son stands by his mother, even though mother is at fault. Some lullabies (Hushabies) of mother for her boy and girl child is hereby indicated from the Book “ Popular Poetry of Baloches” M. Longworth Dames published by Balochi Academy, Quetta in 1988.

1. Hushaby to my little boy;  
 Sweet sleep to my son.  
 I will kill chicken and take of skin,  
 I must have a chicken’s skin.  
 I will make little skin bag of its legs and  
 Send it to my mother-in-law,  
 A bed of gasht-grass  
 I will spread in the shade of cliff.
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A skin-bag full of yellow ghi,  
 And flesh of fat-tailed sheep,  
 Shall be the food of my son.  
 Hushaby baby;  
 May grow to be an old man.

2. Nazi has pitched her little tent near the boundaries of Gumbaz,  
 And the feathery tamarisk of Syahaf, Her grandfather's grazing ground.  
 She calls to her father and her uncle, and her brother's companions,  
 Fair to view, and her uncle's tiger-like sons,  
 And her aunt's well-trained children's come all of you,  
 Into my tent, for the clouds have gathered overhead,  
 And perhaps your fine weapons and your quiver and arrows will be damp.  
 The shameless slave girls have gone away,  
 The cows have suckled their calves in the jungle,  
 And Gujar has driven away the herds of camels.  
 Lullaby, I sing to my little girl.

### **Common Women**

Baloch is bashful nation and they respect the woman. If any male is going on the way and he sees any woman coming from opposite side, they put down their eyes. Baloch tribes consider it respectable to guard the respect of others. If any woman is in *Bahot* (refugee) of any tribe or person, they consider it their duty to guard her and its property. The history of Gohar (Bahot of Mir Chakar), the famous Baloch character during Chakar Khan Rind's period which became the reason of Rind and Lashar 30 years historical feud and Sammi, a widow (Bahot of Doda, brother of Balach), becomes

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historical Balach and Bevargh long battle, are shows that there was respect of women and she right of personal property even in that medieval period for the women of Balochistan. Both women were living independently in the Baloch society when their property herds were killed and looted by a group of other tribal man, then long wars started for the consequences of hurting *bahot*.

**Objectives;**

Less work has been done on Baloch women's role in the society. The authors took the challenge to document the role of Baloch women in the various spheres of life. The thematic concern of this study was to;

- Document the role of Baloch women in the society,
- Diagnose the women role in various sphere of practical life, and
- List the opportunities and problems encounter to them in their practical life.

**Methodology**

Prior to conduct the social survey, secondary resources were explored to know the status of a Baloch working women. In various stages of the study, Baloch working women were approached to know their point of view about their working environment, opportunities, experiences and finally list problems when a woman enter in a job.

**Discussion**

Baloch society generally contains nomadic, semi-nomadic and sedentary segments. Nomadism, which was one of the basic elements of Baloch socio-economic organization, retains its presence in Balochistan. Recent reports indicate that about 5% of the population in Pakistani in townships overlapping the old tribal

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structure of Baloch society. This Balochistan is living a mobile life. The other segment of Baloch society can be termed agro-pastoral nomads, which are roughly 15% of the population. The vast majority of contemporary Baloch live in the villages and small townships, which are scattered in the sparsely populated Balochistan. The recent development of agricultural infrastructure in several parts of Balochistan has produced a class of small feudal and small entrepreneurs in township overlapping the old tribal structure of Baloch society. This segment of society is increasingly absorbing the nomadic and semi-nomadic segments of the Baloch society as due political and ecological happening, their mode of survival is increasingly becoming untenable (**Dashti, 2008**).

Some working women are interviewed and they expressed that, they are facing troubles with their colleagues' behavior. They pointed out that their colleagues who are not aware of Balochi culture and norms due to their urban background creating more troubles. It has been observed that a woman in tribal system is more protected than other societies. Combine or extended family system does not allow husband to humiliate his wife right. This is the moral responsibility of either household head or elder female members to intervene between them to solve the concern disagreement if any. Gradually this system is turn down considering many social and economic stresses.

The rapid changes and modernization in the structure of society not only bringing positive impacts but he is affecting and damaging constructive values, traditions and norms, prevails in Baloch society from the centuries, which are badly affecting the respect, honour and dignity of women. There is need of incorporation and promotion of constructive values, traditions and norms with recent rapid changes and protection of the status women in the light of historical role and importance of women.

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**Women's Role in Political Sphere**

There is a general perception about Baloch women that the Baloch man not allowed their wives to go outside and take part in any social, economical activities but this is not right perception. History shows that Baloch women are very much dynamic in all parts of their social life. Baloch women plays vigorous role in the history. When study the history there are so many Baloch women who were found in the social and political sphere. The role women's empowerment for a just society was highlighted in the Beijing Conference (1995). Women in Baloch society were not only involved in the political affairs of Baloch rulers but they plays active role in the many battle field and led the battalion of tribal army from the centuries. Bibi Banari, the sister of Mir Chakar Khan, Chief of the Baloch tribes, led the battalion of tribal army in war against Dehli in late 15<sup>th</sup> century and won the throne for Mughal emperor Humayun (Mengal, 1968). Bibi Beebo the sister of Khan Mir Ahmad Khan, Khan of Kalat (1666-1696) during battle against Baruzai of Sibi, feels his brother is very tense after many unsuccessful attacks and ask for permission to play her role. She led the battalion of tribal army and attacked on her enemy and martyred near Dadhar during battle (Naseer, 2010). After some time of the martyred of Bibi Beebo, the daughter Mir Ahmad Khan, Bibi Bano led the tribal army and attacked on Baruzai of Sibi and won the war and occupied the fort of enemy. She was awarded title of *Sherzal* (brave women). Mother of Naseer Khan Azam (1750-1794) Bibi Maryam during the rule of her son led the women and with wife of other tribal elite took part in many battles. They treat the injured and supply arms and ration to the fighters in the battle field. Wife of Malik Deenar Khan Gichki, ruler of Makran, Bibi Roz Khatoon was a noble lady and took part in the many tribal battles with her husband (Aseer, 2005). After death of, Mir Pahar Khan, Sradar of Lasbella in 1742, his widow Bibi Chhaguli become ruler of State. However Jam Ali Khan was opposed her and tried to take over the state affairs but he becomes unsuccessful after many efforts and she rules on the state

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till her death in well manner (**Lehri, 1955**). Bibi Zainab was sister of Mir Mahmood Khan was a people loving and daring lady. She was against her brother's policies and wants make Mir Mustafa Khan as a Khan of Kalat but her youngest brother Mir Muhammad Rahim was opposed her and killed Mustafa Khan. When she hear the sad news and together a big army at place Panjnama (Gandwah) and fight with him and killed Mir Mustafa Khan ( **Naseer, 2010**). Daughter of Khan Mehrab Khan, Bibi Allah Dini was chairs the Deewan (meeting) of tribal chiefs, advised them and decided the tribal feuds (**Aseer, 2005**). Bibi Ganjan wife of Mir Mehrab Khan Shaheed was not only advisor of her husband but was his friend in the many battlefields and took part in many tribal wars as a comrade of her husband. She also took part in battle against British rulers on 13-11-1839 (**Aseer, 1978**). Bibi Mehnaz was daughter of Mir Azad Khan Nausherwani, Ruler of Kharan and married with Mir Naseer Khan II, Khan of Kalat. When 1857 Mir Naseer Khan was died and his brother Mir Khudadad Khan becomes ruler wants to marry with her, she refused to do so and goes to her father's home at Kharan. After sometimes Mir Khudadad Khan suddenly attacked on Kharan with a big army of tribes. Ruler of Kharan when feels he is not capable to fight with him and goes to Afghanistan for help. But Bibi Mehnaz form her fort face the army of Khan of Kalat and on seventh day Khan of Kalat finally agreed for ceasefire (**Aseer, 1978**). Another Baloch woman Gul Bibi from Iranian border area also plays historical role, when 1916 Indian Government appointed General Dyer to curb the border *baghawat*. General Dyer with his tactics controls over on Baloch sardars and occupied on the forts. Gul Bibi wife of Shahsawar learned about control of General Dyer on Khawash Fort, she abuses her Sardar Jeeand and her husband on their loosing. She sent gift to General Dyer and meets with him, after talks she freed her husband and other prisoners ( **Naseer, 1979**).

Above indicated all women belongs to the rulers families and their efforts have been reported but I think there was large numbers of Baloch women, they plays major role but remain unknown in

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chapters of history. Women in Baloch society still playing important role in the social and political sphere and becomes part of upcoming history. This shows that women have more importance in public affairs and decision-making in Baloch society.

### **Women's Role in Economic Sphere**

In traditional societies which lack of market system, the business of everyday living is usually carried on gender division of labour (**Illich, 1982**). In the study of area, the division of labour is mainly between herding and agriculture. In all other tasks concerned with the rural life, such as handicrafts, house building, water collection, food and work on boundary walls, there is division between men's and women's work. However, the boundaries are not so clearly marked, as there is overlapping and deviations from rule. There as well as cases where rule is inflexible and times when changes.

Major portion of agriculture is done by the women who do planting, weeding, hoeing and harvesting in the fields adjacent to houses or far off fields. The other activities of women include looking after house activities, children and animals. Food processing and cooking is women's job. It is the women who with assistance of children are largely responsible for the cattle, water, fuel and fodder. Women take care of feeding the livestock, cleaning the abodes and even in providing traditional care of diseases. They further involved in milking and milking process, poultry, and egg selling. This permits them considerable time away from home and village; they are free to talk to whom so ever they please, male or female, of the area. As a consequence, communication among women and between women is as high as it is among men.

The embroideries work of Baloch women are highly artistic and enjoy the considerable local and international reputation and

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source of earning of the women. A variety of pattern of embroidery is worked, and almost everyone wear some garments which has embroidery upon it. The parts of the dress which are generally embroidered are the front packet and sleeves of the *pashk* (women trouser), the end of men and women drawer, caps and coats. Shawls, Bed sheets and carpet badges are made. The needle work of Balochi women is very fine. There are several descriptions, which are *known kantlo/katlo, kallah, Gagha, Adengo, Siho, bandola, bunhi, siahkash kopgo, Hasht Adengoen jeeg, Karch, Dahdari, Nagul, Zehgani Jamug, Cheeno, Kah yabooti, Charen Adeng, Lolowali, Zorka, Chum-o-srumag, mosam, kapogo mosam, Cheenuk or Daz, bakkali, tattuk, dagardoch, robar, chilko, pravez, pariwar, ohakan etc.*

Baloch women are very strong and courageous in the handling of environmental imperatives as can be demonstrated in the trekking and work pattern under the several limitations of the harsh environment. Several studies dealing with pastoral societies indicates that the portion of women in such societies is not very high because the actual care of the livestock and handling of economic affairs is entirely a male domain. However, among some communities do not directly help in handling of livestock, they look after household work. Women play an important role in their household economy. They work in most operations of all sectors of the local economy and for the longer hours each day than man. In addition to the domestic and reproductive activities associated with household maintenance, they also collect and gather free goods especially fuel, fodder and water. Women operate effectively in most economic and social institutions, participating in the both local and migrant labour activities.

A young lady was approached to get her point of view on the subject. Actually she is working woman and supports her family. She mentioned that working women have certain problems while working in male dominated society and the same I am facing.

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Actually males have dual face; once he is in home, he pay respect his sister as sister, mother as mother and daughter as daughter as they deserve but away from house he thinks that every women is corrupt. They have little access to, and exercise limited control over resources; and few are free from threat and violence at the hands of their husbands. Working for wages is not necessarily an indicator of autonomy. It is further noticed that role of women in the economy was not considered at official level also. It is surprise to mention here that women's contribution in GDP not indicated at all.

**Women's Role in Social Sphere**

Role of Baloch women is not only of important in the economic activities, but her role in non-economic activities is equally important. Formation and continuity of family hearth and home is the domain of women. Women's roles as wives, mother, and organizer are the basic foundations of other dimensions of social life have extreme importance. Among rural population, as men are out for pastoral duties, the socialization of children automatically becomes mother's business, in the early years of their life. The role woman in child birth, funerals and fairs and festivals is an important part of rural life. In the Baloch society women are carrier of traditional information in the absence of written record. They are crucial actors in the preservation and dissemination of such knowledge. They are not only competent food producers and house makers but are transmitters of rich local oral traditions.

There is a large number of Baloch women are playing her role in social sphere as politician, educationist, doctor, engineer, journalist, anchor, social and development worker and taking part socio-economic development of Baloch society.

**Women's Role in literature Sphere**

As stated in the quotation by C.S. Lewis, literature not only describes reality but also adds to it. Yes, literature is not merely a

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depiction of reality; it is rather a value-addition. Literary works are portrayals of the thinking patterns and social norms prevalent in society. They are a depiction of the different facets of common man's life. Classical literary works serve as a food for thought and a tonic for imagination and creativity. Exposing an individual to good literary works, is equivalent to providing him/her with the finest of educational opportunities. On the other hand, the lack of exposure to classic literary works is equal to depriving an individual from an opportunity to grow as an individual in the society.

Literature plays a pivotal role in molding one's thoughts, ideas and, above all, the way of life. It also helps in cultivating moderation and tolerance in the society. Similarly, literature available to a child leaves drastic impact on his/her mind and also help set the course of his/her future. Besides, it not only broadens the horizons of their imagination but also helps them in understanding their society. As, very well said by a wise man-“The mother's lap is the first school for every child”. Baloch women have great contribution in the character building of child and literature, being mother she sing lullaby for son and daughter being grand-mother. She sings wedding songs. These are unrecognized contribution of Baloch women in the promotion of culture and literature at the initial level of life.

The loly (Lullaby) form of poetry is the function of female folk, and the versifier of lullaby, are therefore, mainly females. The art of poetry versification by the female folk is deemed most opprobrious in the Baloch society. We seldom hear the name of a Baloch poetess. It is through this branch of poetry ‘loly’ that poetess express her poetic instincts and ambitions, which are mainly devoted and dedicated to the newly born child. We can name this form of verse as the ‘poetry of cradle, for when child is placed in the cradle, the mother starts singing lullaby. ‘Halo’ which is celebrated by the females of the family and tribe at the time of marriage ceremonies and festivals. The ‘Halos’ are generally versified by women gifted with poetic art, and such, the names of versifiers of ‘halo’ and ‘Loly’

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are unknown, unmentioned and unheeded. We reproduce a lullaby ‘Loly’ which clearly manifests the burning zeal and impatient ambition of Baloch mother who pray for boon, regarding her infants son to become a great lover, a warrior and a highway man in the flower of life ( **Baloch, 1984**):

Alam Din, thou art of young man,  
 Dressed with white garments,  
 Fasten thine six war weapons,  
 The shield, musket and the dagger;  
 Gird the bow around thy shoulder,  
 Take the trenchant sword of Shiraz;  
 Beguile the youthful girls of Jat tribe,  
 Give them as gift the fine cloths of Dera Ghazi Khan;  
 Present them red-coloured cloths,  
 (Ask them) that ye will give them money in cash;  
 Feed thee with neat of young goat,  
 (Also) supply them sugar-candy brought from city;  
 When moon-faced girl of Jat feels pleased,  
 Then she will ask thee;  
 When the sun places it knees on earth (a little before  
 sunset),  
 Bends on the top of the mountains,  
 (And) the stars shine in the darkness of the night;  
 (Then) at that time saddle thine sprightly horse,  
 Mount on the boastful steed;  
 Come near to my residence,  
 Tie the horse with the tree of tamarisk;  
 Sit and keep waiting under the tree,  
 When Punnun (her husband),  
 Starts going towards the cowshed;  
 Drives the buffaloes,  
 (And) the maid-servant, old and lean like saw,  
 Enjoy a full sleep;  
 Then slowly and step by step,

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I will come to see thy graceful form and figure;  
 Will sit together with pleasing heart,  
 And pleasing manner,  
 When the morning star arises;  
 (Then) leave me to go away,  
 Perhaps the coward Punnun may come back,  
 Perchance the vulgar maid-servant too awake from sleep;  
 Ye should (then) return back to join the,  
 The graceful assembly of the Rinds,  
 The chief will send a messenger,  
 To bring the highway-man 'Alam Din';  
 I have to wage war against the bitter enemy,  
 The men of Dajal and Harrand;  
 We have to comb a formidable force,  
 Will array in fight thousands of our warriors;  
 Will ransack the headquarter of bloody enemy;  
 I sing lullaby for my son,  
 May god accept my prayers?

Hani, Mehnaz, Seemuk and Girannaz are not only major player in the Balochi literature but their poetry is evidence of their sadness. In the culture of previous era there were no prohibition and ban on women to express point of view through poetry. They were suitable environment regarding freely expression of their feelings (**Buzdar, 2012**). Lollaby, wedding songs and folk lore are a great literary creation of Baloch women, despite being part of tribal society; women of Balochistan have been expressing themselves through the medium of folk and wedding songs. Women want to raise their voice against the discriminatory attitude of tribal society, express her difficulties and negative attitude of society through her poetry. Role of the Baloch women i.e. Rabia Khuzdari, Hani, Simuk, Mehnaz, Saddo, Mehruk, Shireen, Bibi Khanun, Taj Bano, Bibi Gohar Malik, Umtul-Wajid, Neelam Momal, Abida Dashti, Ain Ain Dashti, Banul Dashtiari, Tahira Ehsas Jatak, Dr, Ambreen Menagal,

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Jahanara Tansum, Amna Yusuf Maoj, Naela Qadri, Uzma Qadri, Naushen Qambrani, Saeeda Hassan, Mah Jabeen Baloch, Fouzia Baloch, Humera Sadaf, Sabeeha Karim, Mehlab Naseer in literature never been ignored.

### **Women's Role in Health Sphere**

Women have always been central in providing medical care, whether offering remedies in the home, nursing or acting as family healer and herbalist. The elderly women in Baloch household are often specialists in the knowledge and techniques of popular treatments. They have some knowledge of home remedies for numbers of problems. In sometime settlements, an elderly female of one household acts by default as the sole herbalist, masseur, and traditional midwife (*Baluk*) for the whole settlement. These women collect different wild herbs from the fields or surrounding jungle. Medicinal herbs are also acquired from the wandering herbalists, who trade raw medicines. These women healer transfer their expertise to their offspring or daughter-in-laws. The remedies used frequently at home could include herbs and plants that are easily available. Elaborate preparations for making home remedies (pounding, grinding, mixing and cooking) are also carried out by these elderly women. They often specialize in certain diseases for which they have specific treatments. Elderly women are also expert in extracting foreign bodies or fish bones and thorns from body. The majority of traditional midwives (*Baluk*) would also have knowledge of giving herbal medicine and massage (**Dashti, 2008**).

In practice, the herbalists working among the Baloch, besides administering medicinal herbs also use many animal extracts for treating their patients but the foundation of their knowledge is concerned with herbal therapy. An herbalist prepares medicines from various plant parts such as roots, shoots, bark, leaf, flower, seed, and fruit. The patient is also advised on diet. The herbalist makes a detail enquiry of the type of sickness or suffering from the patient. The color of eye and skin is checked. The herbalist also enquires from the

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patient type of food he or she consumed during the illness. Generally, all herbalists are expert masseurs. Use of mustard oil is common among the herbalist. Many of them also use pain-relieving ointments available at town chemist. (Dashti, 2008). Women are also involved in the traditional care livestock in the Baloch society.

### **Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behavior that frightens, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure or wound someone. Domestic violence can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion or gender. It can happen to couples who are married, living together. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels.

It is reality that women in Baloch society work more than men and facilities are not available for them but study of Baloch women history is clarifying domestic violence is exist in Baloch society like other society but its shape is different because of values, tradition and norms of the society. Rapid changes in the structure of tribal society are increasing domestic violence like any other society.

### **Honor Killings**

A form of [gender-based violence](#), an honour killing is the [homicide](#) of a member of a family or social group by other members, due to the belief the victim has brought [dishonor](#) upon the family or community. The killing is viewed as a way to restore the reputation and honour of the family (Goldstein, Matthew 2002). Siah Kari (Honor Killing) is an act of murder, in which a person is killed for

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his or her actual or perceived immoral behavior. Such "immoral behavior" may take the form of alleged marital infidelity, refusal to submit to an arranged marriage, demanding a divorce, perceived flirtatious behaviour and being raped. Suspicion and accusations alone are many times enough to defile a family's honour and therefore enough to warrant the killing of the woman.

History of honour killing in Baloch society indicated in the fifteenth and sixteenth century. The principle of Siahkari (honour killing) in its present form was not initially a part of Balochimayar. According to the epic poetry of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, Siahkari was punishable under the law of talaq (divorce). Many Baloch warrior poets were involved in adultery, which can be noticed from the war ballads. The Baloch society of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was similar to European societies (**Khan, 1987**). According Arab writer Salman Tajir, honour killing is available in the Sindh from the early centuries. Discussing marriage traditions, he writes "If any man done adultery with a women, then both man and woman should be punished with the death penalty, it is mandatory in the whole country" (**Memon, 1984**). The limited cases of most honour killings is being reported from the southern parts of Balochistan bordering area with Sindh and Punjab, where large numbers of the cases are being reported in every year. Above mentioned statement indicating that the honour killing is transferred from the other surrounding societies in to Baloch society.

**Conclusion**

In order to appraise the social status of women in these diverse ecological areas, the findings have been divided into subsequent categories; (a) a girl; daughter, (b) mother, (c) married women and (d) common women, e) working women etc. Role of women not only of importance in economic activities, but her role in non-economic activities is equally important. The Baloch women work very hard, in some cases even more than men. However, in

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their own world women have a freedom, and self-expression. With the onset of developmental programmes economic changes are under way but Baloch women remains traditional in their dress, language, tools and resources. The Baloch women play very important and historical role in the field of politics, social, economy, literature, health etc.

Enrollment of female children in primary, middle, high, college and universities are enormously increasing in urban areas. Rural areas are still behind due to non-availability of girls schools in small villages. At present one can see that Baloch females are working in government and private sector. This improvement will bring healthier change in young generations.

Women's role as wives, mother, and organizer are the basic foundation of other dimensions of social life has extreme importance. Among rural population, as men are out for pastoral duties, the socialization of children automatically becomes mother's business, in the early years of their life. The role woman in child birth, funerals and fairs and festivals is an important part of rural life. In the Baloch society women are carrier of traditional information in the absence of written record.

This has been noticed while interviewing young females that working in offices are facing troubles with their colleagues' behavior. Actually they are not aware of Balochi culture and norms due to their urban background. It has been observed that a woman in tribal system is more protected than other societies. Combine or extended family system does not allow husband to humiliate his wife right. This is the moral responsibility of either household head or elder female members to intervene between them to solve the concern disagreement if any. Gradually this system is turn down considering many social and economic stresses.

The structure of the Baloch society is being changing, due to

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emerging the population from nomadic to semi-nomadic and agro-pastoral. The rapid changes and modernization of society, not only bringing positive impacts but it is affecting and damaging constructive values, traditions and norms; prevails in Baloch society from the centuries, which are badly affecting the respect, honour and dignity of women. There is need of incorporation constructive values, traditions and norms with recent rapid changes, revival and promotion of their positive aspects and protection of the status women in the light of historical role and importance of women.

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