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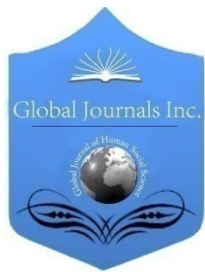
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Gender, Literacy, and Elementary School Students with Reading Centers

By Merfat Ayesah Alsubaie

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Abstract- Reading centers are an important and active part of most elementary classrooms. As a teacher of young children in Saudi Arabia, I observed that there were times when students did not benefit from their literacy experiences, and at other times there was a good deal of activity around their experiences in the reading centers I had developed for them. As a result of this experience in my own classroom, I have continued to have great interest in the role of reading centers for young children's learning. This study is focused on the literacy activities in the reading centers in the elementary classroom. Specifically it is focused on exploring the differences between boys and girls as they participate in reading centers in their classroom. There are differences between boys' and girls' reading interests that have been documented in the research. This study seeks to examine these differences in one elementary second grade classroom.

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Gender, Literacy, and Elementary School Students with Reading Centers

Merfat Ayesh Alsubaie

Abstract- Reading centers are an important and active part of most elementary classrooms. As a teacher of young children in Saudi Arabia, I observed that there were times when students did not benefit from their literacy experiences, and at other times there was a good deal of activity around their experiences in the reading centers I had developed for them. As a result of this experience in my own classroom, I have continued to have great interest in the role of reading centers for young children's learning. This study is focused on the literacy activities in the reading centers in the elementary classroom. Specifically it is focused on exploring the differences between boys and girls as they participate in reading centers in their classroom. There are differences between boys' and girls' reading interests that have been documented in the research. This study seeks to examine these differences in one elementary second grade classroom.

I. INTRODUCTION

I chose this topic because I observed that the children who were in second grade in elementary school were weak in reading skills and they did not benefit from the reading center or the lab at the school. Thus, for the purpose of my educational study, I will choose the elementary school to do my research on how the teacher can develop the children's reading skills in elementary school by using the reading center. I will get permission from the elementary school administration to do my research and observe one of the reading classes for five weeks. I will make a survey for reading teachers and children's parents; I am going to interview the children and the reading center teacher, and I will use my own experience and my observations because I was a teacher and I taught Arabic reading with writing for girls in the second-grade classroom in the elementary school in my country, Saudi Arabia. A review of literature will also inform by research and understanding. Falk's and Blumenreich's book, *The Power of Questions: A Guide to Teacher and Student Research*, will guide the qualitative analysis of the data.

Since there is a relationship between the feminist movement and religions, I have chosen to work on feminism theory for my paper, which is a part of my culture as an Arabic Muslim woman. For example, there is Islamic feminism that is concerned with the women's role in Islam. It aims for equality of all Muslims,

irrespective of ethnic background, gender, and race. calls and appeals to find and create equality between the sexes in the society through the Holy Quran prior to one thousand, four hundred years ago (Badran, 2002). My methodology work is about how the teacher can develop the reading skills of children in elementary school by using reading centers. Since I have chosen feminism theory as one of the foundations for my study, I have to integrate subjects, reading and feminism, in one question. My main question for this study is: *How does gender influence children's engagement in an elementary classroom reading center?*

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

a) *Feminism, Gender Equity and Education*

Feminism is a collection of movements that attempt to qualify and defend equal social, political, and economic rights and equal opportunities for men and women (Boston & Mifflin, 1992). Feminist theory is an integral part of several Middle Eastern women's groups and has been for some. Feminist theory has also influence the women's movements in this region of the world. It includes: the theories about the origins of inequality and the social construction of sex or gender (Gilligan, 1977).

In addition, feminists' activities have struggled or contended for women's right. For example, feminists' activities have supported women's right to bodily safety, personal, social, and procreative rights. They also are against sexual harassment and domestic violence, and they have defended the rights of women in employment, including equal income and business (Gilligan, 1977). It is important to note that Islam, as it is represented in the Holy Qu'ran, gives women the right to education and encourages them to educate, but it is not co-education. For example, in Saudi Arabia, a woman has the opportunity and access to excellent higher education even though the education in a co-educational format; in other words, women are educated separately from men ("Women's education and work in Saudi Arabia", 2004).

According to general Saudi Arabian culture, women's situations educationally are different according to the cultural group from which they come. For example, in the past in Saudi Arabia, there was education segregation between men and women because of the traditions and customs of general Saudi Arabian culture, even though their religion is Islam, which encourages equal education for women. At that

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time, men's educational opportunities were superior to what was available to women. For example, men received their education in formal schools, while women could not have education in schools, they could have education from women who volunteered to educate them at either the mosque or their house. Today, the educational situation of both men and women and for boys and girls has changed dramatically. The government provides schools and education for both genders from pre-school through higher education. The education that is provided continues to be segregated by gender, but the education is equal in substance and quality. These changes have come because people have become more open-minded and better educated. As a result, women play an important role beside men in the development of Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, many women in Saudi Arabia have high professional positions. For instance, they work in a variety of fields, such as doctors, teachers, nurses, stylists, business, and interior design, and they earn high salaries that may sometimes be higher than men. Nevertheless, there are some categories of educational jobs that women do not get hired due to cultural and religious reasons. For example, women can not teach males from elementary school age through higher education in universities even though they can teach them in kindergartens and daycares. In contrast, men are not allowed to teach females of any age, except in the university. In this case, women and men are taught together in the same room, but a screen divides the women from the men and the male professor. The women are able to view the professor on a projection screen, but the teacher is not able to see the women. The women attending a male professor's class communicate with him via microphone. Most recently, the government has allowed for male professors to work directly with their female university students in medical school because of the particular demands of this field and the need to demonstrate specific procedures and techniques for each medical student.

i. *From my perspective: Addressing gender inequality through education*

In my opinion, governments can decrease the inequality between the genders through education. Education plays an important role in reducing inequality between the sexes. For example, the government should unify the educational system in the country, rather than having each region or state operating independently. With this unity, the government can promote and support equality between the different genders and respect for diversity and multiculturalism for all sexes in preK-12 schools and in the universities. This has definitely been the case in Saudi Arabia. Education has become more equitable throughout the entire country through a unified school system directed by the central government.

In addition, the government should adopt the principle of equal educational opportunity and support higher education for both men and women who are unable to obtain it due to limited economic means. For instance, the Saudi Arabian government provides for a university education and scholarship abroad for both sexes. As a result, the government has opened the door of education for everyone of any social class, so there is feminism in the educational aims of the Saudi Arabian government.

b) *How Gender Differences Affect Learning to Read*

Several studies argue that gender inequality exists in education, especially in reading. One of them found that girls were better than boys in reading according to the differences between the two genders in their abilities with reading (Johnston & Logan, 2010). In addition, some studies report that there were differences between children in reading skills; that girls did better in specific reading skills, such as reading comprehension, equivalent word, and spelling scores than boys when they learned through analytic phonics. However, boys had better scores in vocabulary reading, spelling, and reading understanding than girls if they learned or were taught by synthetic phonics (Johnson & Watson 2007).

Some studies report that when boys were taught with a synthetic phonics method, their reading skills, like sounding and word reading, improved quickly. Moreover, a different study found boys' reading skills were better than girls when they learned by an approach that depended on phonics. Another study notes that gender difference plays an important role in different attitudes or positions in reading and reading motivation. There is a relationship between boys' attitudes toward reading and their reading comprehension performance (Logan & Johnson, 2009; McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth, 1995).

Some researchers found that boys' attention during reading is less than girls' attention after some researchers conducted several studies and observations of boys and girls in their reading classrooms. Thus, the difference between the sexes is related to reading skill development (Logan, Medford, and Hughes, 2011).

On the other hand, some studies show that girls have the ability to gain the oral skills of reading, so girls are better than boys in verbal ability in reading (Lagerberg & Westerlund, 2008). In addition, because girls in first grade have better optical memory, they will profit more than boys from visual reading methods related to important reading skills (Logan & Johnston, 2010).

Some of studies suggest that genetics play significant roles in gender differences in reading skills. At the same time they argue that gender differences affect the development of children's reading skills since

brain activation during reading is different for both sexes (Hawke, Wadsworth, Olson & Defries, 2007).

In contrast, 66% of the studies assert that gender differences are not important with oral ability in reading. Further, when Johnston and Logan (2010) made a test of 107 children on their vocabulary, word reading, and phonemic awareness, they found there were not important differences between sexes in reading.

Girls enjoy reading more than boys, so they have deduced that this is the reason the girls are better readers than boys (Twist & Sainsbury, 2009). Various studies conclude that there are cultural influences that create gender differences in reading in elementary schools. For example, in the U.S and Canada, studies have found that girls are better readers than boys; however, in England and Nigeria, their studies have found that boys have higher scores in reading than girls (Johnson, 1973-74). Further, other studies argue the gender roles of children showing that girls are better than boys in reading because the girls are encouraged to outperform in school academically, but the boys are encouraged to practice several other kinds of activities in addition to their academics, such as playing football (Fuller, Hua, and Snyder, 1994).

The Johnson (1973-74) study points out that there are a variety of differences in cultures, societies, and school environments that affect gender differences in reading. For instance, a study was conducted comparing American and German students in sixth grade to evaluate specific skills of reading, such as speed and reading comprehension. As a result, the female, American students had higher scores than the boys; however, the male, German students had better scores than the girls. Other studies confirm this strong cultural influence on reading fluency (Fuller, Hua, and Snyder, 1994). Therefore, this serves to illustrate that the cultural and societal environment and expectations may have significantly different influences on gender roles and performances in reading.

This search also shows that gender differences in reading skills are more cultural than physiological. Girls are achieving better scores in reading than boys in elementary schools. Therefore, "It seems apparent that sex differences in reading may be attributed primarily to cultural rather than to physiological determinants" (Johnson, 1973-74, p.18).

In addition, American and Canadian teachers in elementary schools believe girls are better readers; nevertheless, at the same time, Nigerian teachers believe that boys have more reading skills than girls. There are different studies that show gender differences in reading in different cultures. One of them reports parents in North America prefer their sons to practice many types of sports outside rather than staying inside to read (Johnson, 1973-74). Therefore, The International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement

(IEA) reports the girls in 28 of 31 countries are at a higher level in language and reading accomplishment than boys (Fuller, Hua, and Snyder, 1994).

Another research study conducted six tests in reading skills, like reading comprehension and vocabulary, at three grades levels in Canada. They found girls excelled and outperformed boys on 14 reading skills tests; nevertheless, boys surpassed girls on 4 of the reading skills.

i. *From my perspective: How gender differences affect learning to read*

Anecdotally speaking, according to my experience growing up, my mother gave birth to twins, my brother, Azam and my sister, Majed. Now, they are in fourth grade in elementary school. When they were in second grade, I taught them in our home and helped them in doing their homework, especially reading with writing because my major is in the Arabic language. I found my brother; Azam, has more reading skills than my sister; Majed, such as reading understanding and spelling even though my mother spent a lot of time teaching my sister, Majed. This personal experience has caused me to believe that gender differences may influence reading skills and experiences in schools.

c) *How Gender Differences Affect Attitudes Toward Reading Choices*

Gambell and Hunter note that girls are more successful in reading skills and better readers than boys. In addition, because girls are inclined to be more emotive and romantic than boys, they read more and prefer to read narratives that are fiction more than non-fiction, and they focus on characters in novels. In contrast, boys read less than girls, and they read a wider range of topics than girls (Gambell & Hunter, 2000).

A different study has concluded that there is a relationship between female reading and male reading; that female reading is related with leisure activity; whereas, male reading is related with the work environment and business. Further, this study reports reading attitudes and practices of 16-year-old English-Canadian students by gender. It shows that there are gender gaps in reading; that more girls (67.2%) than boys (53.1%) spend more than 15 minutes reading every day for their classes. Girls read every day for interest and enjoyment. Thus, girls like reading more than boys (Gambell & Hunter, 2000).

i. *From my perspective: Looking to the future*

Further, after reading many of these studies, I want to design special programs to encourage students from both genders in the elementary school to develop reading skills that will be enhanced by their experiences with the reading centers and activities at their school. If students are struggling with their literacy development, the programs I plan to develop will divide students' time between their general academic classes and tutoring

classes to improve their reading skills; the program will be appropriate for both genders. I expect that that results will be useful and create progress with the reading skills of the students in this elementary school programs. The programs will assess the students' reading and help them to read with greater ease, more skillfully, and clearly. The study that is described in the sections that follow will contribute to my knowledge of literacy as it interfaces with gender in the elementary school, and, as a result, will assist me in the development of the programs I plan to develop in the future.

d) *In Summary*

In short, gender differences in reading performance in school are an interesting subject, and there are many studies about this topic. Many studies report that females are better than males in reading skills. On the other hand, there are different studies concluding that boys have more reading skills than girls. In addition, some studies suggest that the culture of the students plays an important role in gender differences in reading. Because of the varied results in the research literature, I have come to believe that gender differences in reading are not a significant factor; everyone has special skills depending on his/her ability with literacy learning.

III. METHODOLOGY

a) *The Participants*

This research was conducted in a public elementary school in Kalamazoo, Michigan after getting permission from the school administration. I went to the school to meet the principal because I wanted to get written permission to do my research in the school he led. Also, I explained to him why I had chosen this school particularly, i.e. that I had found the required student population for my educational research there. I worked with the principal to choose one of the elementary classrooms to observe how the teacher developed children's reading skills at their reading centers and through other literacy activities. As a result of our collaboration, a second grade teacher volunteered to participate in this study. The teacher was African American, and she was 45-54 old years. She had been teaching elementary school for thirty years and was now the second grade. In addition to the teacher participant, all 23 students in the teacher's classroom also participated in this study after granting their written assent and receiving the consent of their parents.

This was a diverse classroom demographically speaking. The children ranged in age from seven to eight years. Approximately 55% of the children in the classroom qualified for free and reduced breakfast and lunch. The children came from a wide range of ethnic and racial backgrounds, with several children speaking

English as their second language. There were 23 children in this class; twelve girls and eleven boys. Within this classroom, there was a child from China (boy), another from India (girl), and two children from Saudi Arabia (one boy and one girl). Seven of the children were African American (four girls and three boys) and two were American Indian (one boy and one girl). Three of the children were Hispanic (two girls and one boy). The other seven children were European American.

b) *The Setting*

This classroom had educational materials and comfortable furniture for both the teacher and the students that helped students to have great learning and educational experiences with their teacher. This classroom included: 2 big white boards, and 1 big book, all of which were used during whole group literacy time.

c) *Research Questions*

My main research question was: "What are the differences between girls' and boys' responses to the reading center activities and other literacy experiences that are designed to enhance and to develop their skills with reading?"

The three sub-questions for this study were:

- Which literacy activities in the reading center and elsewhere in the classroom do the boys most prefer?
- Which literacy activities in the reading center and elsewhere in the classroom do the girls most prefer?
- How can teachers of reading support both genders to develop their skills with reading through the literacy activities in their classrooms?

After I have researched the question and sub-questions, I collected the data for my study. I anticipated that the data I collected would provide information that was significant for my study, and that it would provide answers that directly addressed my research question and sub-questions.

d) *Data Tools*

I used observations, field notes from the observations, a teacher survey (see Appendix A) and both teacher and student interviews (see Appendices B and C) as the data tools for this study (Falk and Blumenreich, 2005).

i. *Data tool description*

Because I wanted to collect the data for my research that was about the differences between genders in the regular classroom as they engaged in reading centers and other literacy activities, I needed to focus on specific elements in the reading activity processes. These areas included how the reading centers and other literacy activities contributed to improving the children's reading skills according to their

gender, how the teacher encouraged the children to benefit from their literacy activities, what methods or strategies the teacher used to enhance their reading skills, and what reading skills improved through their literacy activities.

I visited the elementary classroom for four weeks from 8 am to 12 pm because the reading classes were held during this time. This allowed me to have ample time to observe the children's interaction and reading skills in their classroom. I wrote journals and notes about these themes or areas and kept them filed.

I prepared the survey for the classroom teacher whose room I was observing in (see Appendix A). The questions were divided into personal and professional questions related to age, race, gender, and the role the literacy activities (reading center) played in developing children's reading skills.

The third method I used to collect data was interviewing children in the elementary school classroom and keeping a running record of their answers in the interview. This was done during a time that the school administration determined (see Appendix B). I interviewed six children selected by the teacher who fit into these categories: one high performing girl, one middle range performing girl, one girl who struggled with reading, one high performing boy, one middle range performing boy, and one boy who struggled with reading.

I also interviewed the classroom teacher (see Appendix C). Because I had experience in teaching, I used my past experience and observation skills to facilitate in this interview.

ii. *Data organization*

After I collected the data, I analyzed the data and organized the data in specific ways to help me sort the information, conserve and utilize the data in the most effective and efficient of ways. Since almost all of the data was qualitative, I used some strategies or methods, such as coding, charting, outlining, cluster mapping, and indexing to help me to organize and analyze the data easily and clearly. I read and reviewed the interview notes, articles, filed journals, observations, and records. Then I took notes while reviewing and interpreting the data by attaching importance to themes that emerged, and I wrote lists of important themes in the data by charting, outlining, or indexing. For example, I used the clustering map and outline to record and organize my observations, and I made a chart to conserve and consolidate the results of the interviewing and survey questions.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

a) *Detailed Observation and Description of the Classroom Environment*

This classroom was a *peaceful, safe place* for children. Each morning the teacher focused on

welcoming the children to her classroom and helping them to put their belongings away and to settle into the classroom and prepare for their learning. The children started the morning with a healthy snack and then the day of learning began. The teacher organized and led her classroom quietly. She consistently spoke with a quiet, calm voice.

The teacher's classroom leadership was strong, but not overly controlling. She provided children with feedback about their behavior by using a chart at the front of the room. If children were on task, their names were included on the green team. If they were struggling, then a yellow warning sign was placed by their name, and the teacher talked with them quietly about the ways in which they needed to change their behavior. She was persistent and she worked with the children who had warnings again and again to help them understand how they needed to work to rejoin the green team. If a child persisted in being off task and/or with disruptive behavior, a white warning sign replaced the yellow warning sign. This was the "last warning" sign. Always the teacher encouraged children to rejoin the green team and to focus on their learning. If the child with a white last warning sign persisted, then a red sign was placed by their name and the teacher accompanied the child to office to call their parent(s). I observed on more than one occasion as children placed the accurate sign by their name when they were struggling and/or replaced a yellow warning sign with a green as they rejoined the green team. The teacher's system to assist children to focus on their learning worked well and caused a minimum amount of disruption as the teacher and the children worked together to help them focus on their learning.



Figure 1 : Green team. This figure shows the teacher's way to monitor the children's behavior in the classroom

This was a *sharing classroom* where children felt comfortable to ask for help and to offer their help, and even their morning snack to visitors. As I observed during the week, children felt free to ask for my assistance as they needed and so I became, in some ways, a participant observer in this study.

This classroom was very complex. In the following paragraphs I have described the classroom setting and environment. A detailed diagram of the classroom follows the description.

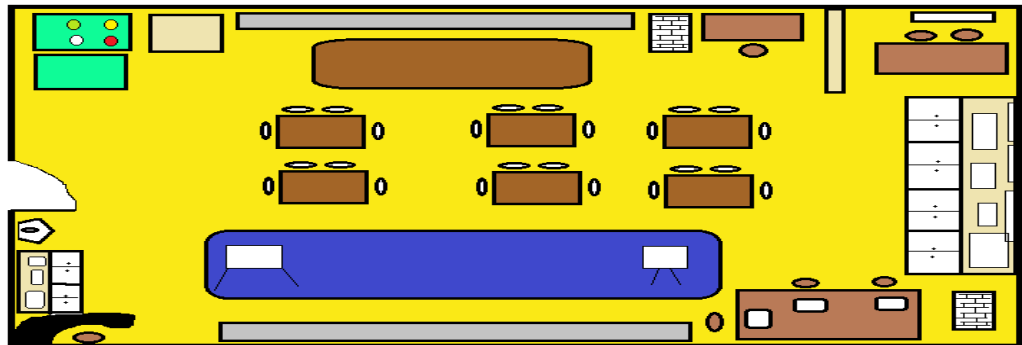


Figure 2 : Classroom diagram. This figure illustrates the full layout of the teacher's classroom

The classroom had a lot of educational equipment and materials. The teacher's desk was not in a prominent location; rather it was off to the side, and she used it for grading papers and meeting with people, but most of the time she was other places in the room. It was in the northwest section of this classroom.



Figure 3 : Teacher's desk. This figure shows the teacher's area to grade papers and meet with a variety of people. It is located in the northeast corner of the room. A T.V. is hung on the wall for classroom viewing during selected lessons

Moreover, this classroom had two big white boards, which were used to show information and lessons to all students in the classroom. One of them was on the left side in this classroom. The teacher used it to write the agenda every day and the name of teachers in the classroom and visitors. The teacher also used this board to show some information,

explanations, pictures, and examples of answers to the worksheets using digital the projector. Below this board, there was a long shelf that contained several levels and types of books. As you can see, the teachers used every available space to store and display the educational materials available to the children.



Figure 4 : Whiteboard 1. This figure shows the whiteboard, which the teacher used to write the agenda and show some information to the children by the digital projector



Figure 5 : The digital projector. This figure shows the teacher's method to show some information on the whiteboard to the children. It faces the white board on the north wall

Another big white board was on the right side in this classroom. This board was used specifically for the whole group reading lessons. The teacher used it to fill in the information about each story as she discussed the stories with all of the students in whole group. Near

this board, there was a carpet that was the place for all of the students to gather during whole group reading time. This carpet was a rectangle shape with dimensions of approximately twelve by twenty feet.



Figure 6 : Whiteboard 2. This figure shows the whiteboard, which the teacher used for the whole group reading lessons. It is on the north wall

There was a "big book" in this classroom that was in at the front of the carpet. It was used to display many color papers, words, and pictures that the teacher used to show the summary and important information of the story. Beside the "big book", there was a chair for the teacher that she sat on during reading time with whole group.



Figure 7 : Big book. This figure shows the big book that the teacher used for displaying the summary and important points of the story with the whole group reading lessons. It stands in front of the white board on the north wall

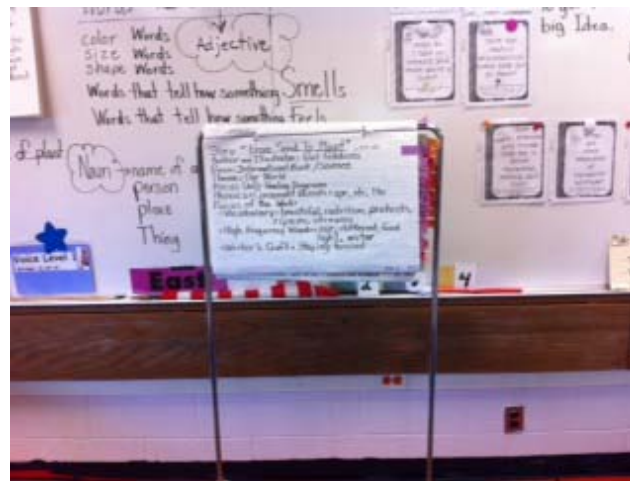


Figure 8 : Big book. This figure shows the big book from a different angle than Figure 7



Figure 9 : The carpet. This figure shows the children's place during the whole group reading lessons

There was also one semicircular table with a teacher's chair and six students' chairs that were behind the "big book". This table was used as a center for one of the literacy activities. The teacher sat with six students around this table to read and discuss the story and do

the worksheets associated with the story. In addition, there was a bell on this table that the teacher used to ring as a signal for the times the students needed to rotate to their next literacy activities at the reading centers.



Figure 10 : The semicircular table. This figure shows one of the reading centers, which is the literacy activity with the teacher. This was the favorite center for the children

There was also another technology resource in this class. There were four computers beside each other that were sitting on one table. This area of four computers was in the northeast section in the

classroom. This area of the classroom was used as a reading center for one of the literacy activities during small group literacy time. The students used this area to take a reading test after reading their books.



Figure 11 : Computers in the classroom. This figure shows a reading center for one of the literacy activities that children used to take a reading test after reading their books

This classroom also had natural light because it had a big window that spanned the entire length of one side of this classroom and allowed the sunlight to enter the room. This window was on the north side in the classroom. There was a long shelf that was under the window. There were several baskets on this shelf that

held a variety of materials and resources that were used for the literacy activities in each of the reading centers. Also, there were many cupboards under this shelf. The teacher used them to keep her classroom materials for the literacy activities that she prepared for the reading centers.



Figure 12 : Windows and literacy activity materials. This figure shows the potential natural light in the classroom (note the contrast in light when the shades are drawn) and some materials for the literacy activities in the reading centers

There were six table centers in the middle of this classroom. The teacher put two rectangular tables together to form a larger working space for each group of children (12 smaller tables combined to create six table centers). Each table center contained a small basket to hold pencils and pens as well as a container

to hold the individual folders for each of the students. In addition, each one of these tables was used as a reading center for the literacy activities. These six table sections were also where the children sat for their other small group and whole group lessons during the day.



Figure 13 : Table centers for the students. This figure shows each one of these table centers that was used as a reading center for the literacy activities and the children's daily work

There was a sink in this classroom, which was near the door, and there was another shelf that was beside the sink. There were also some cupboards under this shelf for keeping the classroom's materials. A T.V was also located in this classroom and was hung on the wall above the teacher's desk.

i. *Detailed description of the whiteboard used during literacy time whole group*

On the other hand, there were important reading objectives and skills that the teacher planned to address with her students because they contributed to the development of the students' reading skills. Related

to the teacher's plan, there was a board in this classroom, which was in this classroom where the specific objectives for science, social studies, spelling, handwriting, and writing were listed. Some of these objectives are listed below:

- Science: To measure volume, which container has more?
- Social Studies: To understand what contributions are made to American history by African Americans?
- Spelling: To write words correctly on our assignments.
- Handwriting: To make our letters legible in words on our daily assignments.
- Writing: How can I make my stories better through revision and editing? How can I write a narrative story with my new words?

Also, this board contained key concepts in language arts, such as directions about how to make a good question and how to ask questions about the content of their reading in language arts. Two examples of these key concepts listed at the board follow:

- ii. *Making questions is an essential part or process to understand the story and improve the student's questions*

Note that the teacher asked them to start their sentences with one of these words to make a question (who, what, when, how, which, why, and where).

- iii. *There are essential questions to ask in order for a student to understand what they read*
- Examples of these essential questions are:

- How do I use text features to find information or facts from a passage?
- What are some examples of figurative language?
- How can I use context clues to understand story meaning?

How do pictures and words help me to know characters, setting, and plot?

b) *Detailed Observation and Description of Classroom Literacy Time*

The Mariam Elementary School (a pseudonym has been used to maintain confidentiality for the participants) was the location where I collected the data for my master's degree capstone research. The first step in my data collection was to begin formal observations of the classroom literacy time. I observed 23 second grade children for five weeks, two times per week, for two hours each time. The literacy time started at 11: 00am and ended at 12:30 each day. The schedule for the literacy time was as follows:

- 11: 00-11:30 Whole group times with children on the carpet for reading.

- 11: 30-12:30 Small groups at the reading centers.

The observations took place during their reading time. These observations included both whole group reading time where the teacher used traditional methods as well as reading time with literacy activities where the children gathered in small groups and participated in reading centers. While some students are in small groups with the teacher, the remaining students are at centers working on reading skills. In addition, there are groups directed to their assigned reading centers. At the end of whole group time, the teacher directed each group to a particular center. For example, the Red group was directed to a small group center reading table, the Yellow group to Center 4 where they were involved with the Rainbow Spelling activity, the Blue group went to Center 2, and Green group Center 3, etc.

It is important to note that this class of 23 children was divided into two literacy categories, intensive and strategic. The intensive group included the children with the highest need in the development of their literacy skills. The strategic group included the children who were reading on grade level or above. During the small group period, the teacher always met first with the intensive group. She always met second with the strategic group in small groups as planned.

There was a change in groups, which also included the group at the reading table. At the end of small group the teacher rang a bell once and the students in each center had to quickly clean up their area and lineup. The teacher rang the bell once more and students moved around the perimeter of the room to the next center in numerical order from where they had been. For instance, the red group was at center 2, after the second bell, they would proceed to center 3.

There were several literacy stations. Each student was supposed to have a reading accountability journal to write in. The literacy stations that were included in this study were:

- *Center 1-* Small reading groups werewith the teacher for instruction at the reading table.
- *Center 2-* The student read to himself/herself while seated on the carpet. After reading a book, the student would fill out a log sheet (writing in the narrative elements). Finally, the student took an accelerated reading test on the computer. A paraprofessional was at the computer to help or read with individual students.
- *Center 3-* "Fry the Word"- Students pulled five words for the other students, said the word and laid them in the frying pan; lastly, the student made a sentence with each of the words in their reading accountability book.
- *Center 4-* "Go Fish or Concentration"- The cards were pulled or turned over as the students said the

Fry Words. After the game was finished, the students would make a sentence with each of the Fry words in their reading accountability book.

- *Center 5- Rainbow Spelling-* The child wrote the spelling words with a multicolor pen and then made a sentence with the word in their accountability book.
- *Center 6- CVC Game (Consonant Vowel Consonant game)* was a different literacy station. Under the teacher's direction, the students moved to the large classroom white board, wrote on selected words on the white board, said the word and wrote the word in a sentence in their accountability book.

i. *Materials and resources the teacher used*

There were many resources and materials that students used in the literacy stations and activities.

These resources helped students to be more effective and benefit from the reading centers. For example, there were different materials for literacy activities, such as books for all learners (leveled readers), sounds of sunshine and decodable books (Harcourt book), Fountas & Pinnell leveled literacy intervention, phonics for the week (KPS curriculum 2nd grade calendar schedule), high frequency words (Harcourt), making words (Cunningham and Hall), technology resources (accelerated reading, Raz-Kids, Read Naturally), trade books, school library book collection and their own Mariam Elementary School books which were AR books, personal Accelerated Reading book collection, public library book collection, and paraprofessionals to assist students with literacy.



Figure 14 : Materials storage for the reading centers. This figure shows the variety of materials for the literacy activities in the reading centers



Figure 15 : A specific example of material for a reading centers. This figure shows one type of literacy activity in a reading center



Figure 16 : One more section of the same activity. This is another page in the literacy activity featured in Figure 15; the children matched words with their corresponding pictures

ii. *Summary description of the literacy centers*

The classroom where observed the children as they engaged in their literacy activities at reading centers was provided with all of the materials that were useful and necessary to develop their reading skills, such as several types and levels of books, many kinds of literacy games, four computers, a white board, and a variety of literacy worksheets. The teacher always prepared these materials before the literacy time started. The students knew ahead of time which center they should join and which materials they use. This allowed for a punctual beginning for the literacy time each day.

iii. *Detailed observation of the students engaged in whole group reading time*

As a result of my observation, I found all students in this class liked and preferred to participate in reading through their involvement in the reading centers and the literacy activities they experienced there; they preferred this kind of literacy experience over whole class literacy time. During whole class literacy time, the children gathered on a carpet and the teacher read a story to them from what is called "a big book." This is an enlarged format book that is identical to one of the text sets they had in the classroom that each of the children had read and were familiar with. This was a time for the children to sit quietly and to listen to the story as it was read to them. It was a time for them to talk with the teacher about key elements in the story, such as setting, characters, new vocabulary, the theme of the story, and

how the story related to the children's lives. When students participated with all of the class on the carpet, some of the children were bored, and these particular children did not pay attention well as the teacher read and discussed the story with the students. This was especially the case for two of the six boys in the classroom. One of the boys, in particular, struggled most of the time with the whole group literacy experience. Two of the fourteen girls in this classroom also struggled to engage in the whole group literacy time. Twelve of the fourteen girls were consistently more interested and interactive in the whole group exercises than six of the boys and two other girls when they were with the whole class on the carpet. In fact, the six boys were more than ready when the time came for dismissal to the reading centers, to the point that they would leave the carpet prematurely and their teacher had to call them back.

iv. *Description of one whole group "big book" literacy session with the teacher*

For this particular session, the teacher chose the story entitled *China World*. The story was in a "big book" format that allowed all of the children to see (see photo on page 21). This particular story fits within the multicultural genre for children's stories. The intention with this particular session is focused on five different reading areas: 1) *Phonics*, specifically "er" and "est", was a focus in this whole group lesson. The teacher had the students go through the story and give examples

from the story of words that contained “er” and “est” endings. She also asked the students to share other words they had in their minds that also had “er” and “est” endings. 2) *The teacher referred to this second reading area as a “big idea”* which was related to the theme of the story. In this case, the theme or “big idea” was focused on the idea of “neighborhood news” or the sharing that goes on in neighborhoods because the members of the neighborhood know each other and share what has happened in their lives. The story took place in a neighborhood in a Chinese community. The teacher used this as an opportunity to talk about neighborhoods in other countries and in the United States, how those neighborhoods were the same and how they were different. Several children in the class were from different countries, and so they could speak to the commonality from direct experience. 3) *Asking Questions* was an important part of this whole group experience. The teacher asked these questions as the students gathered on the carpet each time to read and discuss the story:

- Introduction: After the teacher and children were seated on the carpet, the teacher started the new lesson after reviewing the last lesson by introducing the new story with questions, asking the students to relate the story with their reality, and by showing the pictures in the story).
- Reading the lesson: The teacher read the story or lesson and the children listened to the teacher’s reading. Also, the teacher discussed the story with children as she read the story.
- Discussion of the story or lesson: The teacher asked the children about the story or lesson: She asked the children to visualize what they had read and heard. For example, the teacher asked them:
 - o What do you hear in the story? e.g. music, fireworks sounds, and several sounds of characters and events.
 - o What do you watch or see in the story? e.g. pictures of characters, dancing, and characters talking.
 - o What do you smell in the story? e.g. food and smoking of fireworks.

4) *Inferences* were also a part of this whole group session. The teacher called inference “making a smart guess.” In this particular session the teacher discussed the whole story with the children, and she asked the children if they could figure out the meaning of different things that occurred in the book that were not explicit or directly spoken of. In other words, she was teaching them how to infer from what they read and from what the illustrations included as well. There was a Chinese student in the class who the teacher called on to share additional information to help the class have even more detail about Chinese neighborhoods; he became the

class expert on this topic. All the students were excited to ask their Chinese classmate questions about his country and his neighborhood. At the conclusion of the discussion, the teacher asked the students to develop a new question that they had not addressed during the discussion. She guided their question asking, by explaining different kinds of questions, such as “who,” “what,” “where,” “when,” and “how.” As the students developed their questions, she invited the Chinese student to help her answer the questions that were raised. The Chinese student was able to address most of his classmates’ questions. At one point in time, he turned to me while they were discussing the Chinese calendar and the Chinese New Year, and he asked if Saudi Arabia also had a New Year celebration. I shared the Saudi Arabian celebration and other events that were similar and different from what the Chinese celebrated. I then turned to the two Saudi Arabian students and invited them to share about how the Saudi Arabian people celebrated the events that I had introduced. The teacher, along with the students and I, were delighted with this entire whole group experience because the whole class shared a deep interest in the diverse cultures represented in the “big book” and in their own classroom. As the teacher began to close this whole class discussion, she asked the students, “How does thinking and wondering help us to understand what we are reading?” We talked about how our thinking and wondering helps us to solve problems, to figure out new ideas, and to understand the books we read. At the conclusion of this content discussion, the teacher returned to some technical aspects of the story. 5) *Vocabulary* was discussed. The teacher asked the students to share the new words they had learned as they read the story together. She also had the students use each word in a sentence. 6) *Word Frequency* was the last focus of this whole group session. The teacher asked the students to think about how and when they might use the new vocabulary words they had learned. She encouraged them to pay attention to the times when they heard the words or when they might use their new words as they talked and wrote in class.

After the whole group session ended, the teacher asked the children to join with their small groups in literacy activities located in six classroom reading centers. At the same time, the teacher reminded the children about the classroom and reading centers rules. For instance, all groups had to clean up their table and centers and each group had to change its literacy activities at the reading centers every fifteen minutes.

v. *Detailed observation of the students engaged in the reading centers*

Both the boys and girls were more interested in reading centers where they engaged actively with their literacy activities. Also, I found that boys and girls were interested in a particular reading center where they read

a book, wrote about the book or filled out a worksheet with questions about the book, and then took a test about the book at a classroom computer.

The boys preferred to read books, which involved animals or action stories. Boys were more interested than girls in the Consonant Vowel Consonant (CVC) game (see page 18 for a description for a description of this game). The boys appeared to enjoy the opportunity that they had to compete with each other and be challenged as to who would win the game. It is important to note that this was a matching game and it did not require participants to write.

As I attended this class two times per week for five weeks, I observed that girls were more interested in the Rainbow Spelling game (see page 18 for a description of this game). The girls appeared to be drawn to this game because of their skills with spelling and their interest to write words and use the multiple colors of pens at the center. For example, the girls who worked at this center came consistently prepared with their notebooks so that they could write. It was common for girls at this center to use more than one color when they wrote and to go to their teacher if a color had run out or was missing. In contrast, the boys who worked at this center did not care to come prepared, often did not have their notebooks, and had to be sent to their desks to retrieve them.

Both boys and girls were interested in the math games that were also included in the literacy activities. For example, children could match the picture of a watch and the sentence, which expressed the specific time that the picture showed.

vi. *Description of the most interesting center for the children*

I observed that both boys and girls were most interested in the reading center where they had the opportunity to sit at a special table with the teacher that was designed for small group work. The teacher would tell them something to do with their reading books. She would show the four children who were in this reading center the story and read it to them. Next, the teacher asked students about the author of the story. Also, the teacher asked children about the type of story it was, fiction or nonfiction. Then the teacher discussed the pictures in the story with the children, specifically whether they were real or not. She asked children several questions about the story. She also tried to connect the story and its pictures with the children's lives. After this, the teacher gave each child at the reading center a copy of the story to read silently. The teacher gave each child in this center tool, such as a hand-held headset for each child that allowed the child to listen to him or herself as they read the story out loud in a quiet voice. The teacher also gave each child at these center small sheets of paper to write his/her questions or notes about the story. Finally, the teacher

gave children who were at this center a worksheet about the story and gave them a specific length of time to complete it. Then the teacher discussed the answers to the worksheet questions with them.

c) *Final Results Emerging from Observations of the Reading Centers*

I observed that the reading centers with literacy activities played an important role in the development of the reading skills of children in the second grade because the reading centers provided them with the opportunity to improve their skills and strategies in reading. For example, I observed that some of the girls' reading skills developed through their literacy activities, such as comprehension, understanding what they read, grasping new words, and making new sentences and phrases. On the other hand, I observed some of the boy's reading skills were improved, such as using new words in several different sentences.

i. *Teacher interviewing Results*

A teacher interview was the second research tool of my collection data. I asked the teacher some questions about how the classroom reading centers with their activities developed the children's reading skills in elementary school, which were:

- Which of the reading skills of the girls and boys were developed through the literacy activities in the reading centers?
- What differences were there between the ways in which the girls responded to the literacy activities in the reading centers as compared to the boys?
- What types of material or resources in the reading centers improved the child's reading skills in her classroom (see Appendix D).

The teacher told me that by the results of the last Dibels test revealed that 90% of her students had advanced 2 to 3 grade levels in reading. In addition, she told me that the literacy activities in the reading centers contributed to improving the reading skills of both girls and boys. However, she distinguished between the girls and the boys where specific kinds of reading improvement were concerned. For example, she said that the girls might become "more independent in reading activities." In addition she said that girls might develop in these ways, "comprehension; understand and interpret stories—respond to questions; recognize new words using phonics—fluency; follow written directions—can retell main idea; sequencing events—reading compound words and contractions" (Teacher Interview, Response to Question 2—see Appendix D).

On the other hand, the teacher believed that there were some reading skills the boys might improve through their literacy activities in the classroom. She said, "reading comprehension, using phonics for new words, follow written directions, sequencing main ideas, respond to questions, reading to self center—read an

accelerated [book]; reading book—fill out log sheet on narrative elements finally take an AR test on computer; Fry word checker game, vowel consonant and word pattern game (see Appendix D).

The teacher noted that there were differences between the ways in which the girls responded to the literacy activities as compared to the boys. For example, some of her boys and girls were more tasks oriented and somewhat more mature than five of her boys who were identified as being in either the intensive or strategic category in reading skill and needed to be guided through the centers. She also said that these boys were inclined to be more impulsive (see Appendix D).

Lastly, the teacher reported that there were several materials in the reading centers which contributed to improving the children's reading skills in her classroom. She gave examples of these materials, including: Fry phrases, making sentences, and reading short passages and identifying main ideas, sequencing events, making predictions, inferences, identifying the narrative elements and more (see Appendix D).

viii. *Teacher Survey Results*

The Teacher Survey was another tool to collect the data for this research. In the Teacher Survey, the teacher indicated that she strongly agreed that the literacy activities in the reading center played an important role in improving the children's reading in elementary school, generally both girls' and boys' reading skills. In addition, the teacher strongly agreed that children benefited from the literacy activities in the reading centers toward the improvement of their reading skills in elementary school.

On the other hand, the teacher strongly agreed with the statement on the survey (see Appendix D) that her observations of children during literacy activity at the reading center led her improvement of methods in the classroom and that she successfully encouraged the children to benefit from their literacy activities in the reading centers each day. Also, she strongly agreed that the literacy activities at the reading centers helped children become better readers in her elementary school classroom.

The teacher kindly agreed with the survey statement that the boys responded to her encouragement with literacy activities in the reading centers differently than the girls. She thought it depended on the academic as well [as] the social behavior of each student. At the same time, she strongly agreed that there was a relationship between developing the children's reading skills and their involvement with literacy activities in reading centers in the classroom.

The teacher agreed that there were differences in the boy's responses to the literacy activities at the reading centers when compared to their responses

during the general reading class. Thus, the boys who were low in reading usually needed much guidance going through the centers and staying on task in the centers. However, she kindly agreed that there were differences in the girl's responses to the literacy activities at the reading centers when compared to their responses during the general reading class. The girls generally enjoyed working through activities together. As a result, the children who were strategic and met the benchmarks on the Dibels at the beginning of the year usually showed 2 or 3 whole years or more growth.

Student interviews (see Appendix F) were another tool that I used when I collected the data for this research. After the teacher provided me with the names of two students who were excellent, two students who functioned in the middle range, and two students who struggled with literacy in her class, we identified the date, time, and location of the student interviews.

I conducted the students' interviews and the transcript prepared by Dr. Lynn Nations Johnson who is the supervisor of my master's degree capstone research. I conducted the interviews in the Mariam Elementary School library. Student Interview Questions were:

- What do you prefer—your special literacy activities (reading center) or your general reading classes?
- What do you feel when you participate in the special literacy activities (reading center) in your classroom? Why do you think you feel this way?
- Do you enjoy reading during the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why or why not?
- What do you like about the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why?
- What do you choose to do during the special literacy activity choices (reading center choices)?

The Mariam Elementary school library was the best place to interview students because it was a quiet and comfortable place. All students were happy and enthusiastic to be participating in the interview. They were natural and spontaneous when they talked with me. Moreover, all students who were in this class desired to have an interview, but we simply did not have the time to do this. It does, however, indicate that the children perceived the interviewing process in a positive light. When I came back to the classroom to call another student to go with me to the library, all students asked me to choose them.

After interviewing the students, I found all students preferred the literacy activities at the reading centers more than the whole group reading classes. In addition, almost all of the students were happy when they participated in the literacy activities in the reading centers for more than one reason. The reasons that one

or more of the student interviewees gave are listed below:

- The literacy activities were fun.
- They learned new things from them, such as handwriting, writing, and reading.
- The literacy activities gave one student confidence about him/her self.
- Another student stated that these activities in the reading centers sometimes seemed easy and other times, they appeared hard; however, in the end, s/he passed the reading test most of the time.
- One of students said these activities provided him/her with more quiet when s/he was reading.
- They learned together with their partner and friend. For example, if students did not know what to do, they explained that they could learn from and help one another.
- One said the reading centers gave him/her opportunities to write and try to figure out what s/he did not know how to do.
- They had a chance to choose and pick different books and then read to each other.
- Another student told me a different reason why s/he was happy with the reading centers; s/he did not ever get nervous since s/he did not want to rush. S/he knew most of answers already, and s/he usually got done before a lot of other students. Thus, s/he had time to check his/her work, which evidently meant a lot to her/him.
- They learned new things and words, such as longer words.
- They liked the idea that they helped each other and worked together through using the materials and resources at the centers.
- One said s/he enjoyed the literacy activities because s/he could read about animals and how they live.
- They became faster readers through the literacy activities.
- One student said that these activities caused her/him to love reading more. S/he could read any books that s/he was interested in and chose books which were different levels from the library.
- The activities were like playing, not like learning.
- One student told me that s/he liked reading centers because the literacy activities helped her/him to learn and get smarter as s/he learned.
- Another student liked that we the students were allowed to have partners.

Later in the interviews, the students had the opportunity to talk about specific activities that they liked

at the reading centers. The activities that students chose are outlined below:

- They liked sitting at the table with their teacher who told them something to do related to reading their book that was called *The Boxcar Children*.
- They liked choosing books where they were reading at higher levels.
- One student said s/he also selected reading a book and taking the AR Test.
- One student told me that he/she chosen the reading and writing because they were his/her favorite activities in literacy at reading centers.
- One of the students told me that s/he liked reading the books then talking with people about what s/he was reading.
- Another student liked reading books at the reading centers. S/he said that s/he read to the teacher and the teacher called on him/her and s/he answered the questions.
- One of them told me that /s/he selected the games about numbers.
- One student he/she liked reading about meals. I connected this to a class activity that they had focused on reading a book about Chinese New Year that included special meals for the holiday and he/she participated in the discussion a lot, talking about her favorite meals. S/he told us her favorite meal was pizza.
- One student said s/he was at a high level in reading and s/he liked being one of the highest readers (S/he said she was at the 7.6 level.). S/he was in 7.6. S/he liked the idea that s/he could read more and more books and get a higher and higher reading level.
- One student liked the reading test. As s/he described it, "We read the books and listen to the books and take tests on the books to see if we understand the book. If we pay attention our scores become some of our grades."
- One student liked the word game at one of the centers; it was kind of like a crossword.
- Finally, another student told me that s/he liked language arts. S/he read and wrote about it. S/he worked on suffixes of words, and s/he had the papers of the language arts were actually kind of fun. Also, s/he had to look at the book for different words that it said. If it had "ing" suffix and then add it to the end.

V. RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

a) *The Teacher in this Study*

As a result of these findings, I believe that the literacy activities at the reading centers played an

important role in developing children's reading skills in this classroom. The teacher who participated in this study had developed a classroom environment that was helpful to the children, a peaceful place to learn, a fully trusting environment where children cooperated with each other, built friendships, and loved to learn. She had a great background about how to develop the reading skills of the children through the reading center approach. She had an extensive background about the materials and books that could be used, and she had developed an expansive library of reading center choices that she could select from each day. She also had three main professional sources she drew her reading center activities and processes from, 1) *The Daily 5: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades*, 2) *The Café Book: Engaging All Students in Daily Literacy Assessment and Instruction* and 3) *Literacy Work Stations: Making Centers Work*. Clearly she had been working to develop her expertise in this area for many years (thirty, to be exact), and she was highly effective with teaching literacy through the reading center approach.

b) *What We Have to Learn from the Teacher in this Study Regarding Literacy Teaching*

This serves to illustrate that in the reading centers with their literacy activities, the teacher is a significant factor to improve the children's reading skills because s/he has taken special courses and training in the development of the reading skills of children. A teacher with this expertise and training understands that s/he should make the reading center interesting. For example, the teacher may share both girls' and boys' activities and experiences in reading centers as well as provide for small group, large group, or independent work according to what the children need to enhance their reading skills. The teacher also understands that she should give the children free time to choose their books, and s/he encourages children to have interest in reading and in the books they choose, so the children may become good readers who also enjoy reading.

Considering the success of the teacher who participated in this study, it is important to note that for a teacher to be successful with literacy instruction through a reading center approach, that the teacher should be familiar with the literacy activities at reading centers and the kind of environment that must be developed for success with this method. The teacher should also record his/her observations about the children's reading skills and responses in the regular classroom and at the reading centers, so s/he can choose, create, or find a new method that helps to develop the children's reading skills. As a result, the teacher should exploit the reading center's material to enhance the children's reading skills.

I believe the literacy activities at the reading centers are the best way to encourage children to like

reading and to improve their reading skills, and it is a good method to observe and measure the development of the reading skills of children in the elementary school. In addition, there are several materials that are important in the reading centers, such as high attraction, very interesting games, multi media equipment and materials, as well as workbooks and personal notebooks for each child to write in. All of these materials and equipment were readily available in this classroom. The teacher also needs to integrate thinking strategies when s/he plans and uses the reading centers. Thus, the literacy activities at reading centers provide both girls and boys with several skills that are necessary, such as acoustic literacy skills (oral reading skills), compositional writing and analysis skills, and comprehension skills and strategies.

I think that the literacy activities classroom reading centers are a potentially useful way to improve the children's skills in reading, writing, or math in elementary school provided, 1) the teacher creates a classroom environment that fosters trust and independence among the children 2) the teacher has the expertise and does the planning and observation that have been described here. For example, the teacher must be strategic in her/his planning of the literacy activities at reading centers in her/his classroom; each center should have the specific sections that help the children to develop the reading skills they each need to focus on, such as brainstorming and creative thinking, vocabulary building, critical thinking, spelling, dictionary usage, independent writing skills, silent reading, oral reading, structural analysis where students analyze the structure of the stories they read, and effective listening. Learning with the literacy activities at these reading centers should take place in small groups. There is also the possibility to include workshop activities that include a larger number of students (approximately 6-8 students) who work together on a focused reading project that the teacher has planned according to the students' literacy needs. Both the reading centers and the workshops should always be focused on the development of both the boys' and girls' abilities and skills in reading.

c) *What We Have to Learn from the Teacher in this Study Regarding Children*

Where the children are concerned, it is most important to create a classroom environment that nurtures them, that builds trust in their teacher and each other, that inspires them to enjoy learning and being at school, and that motivates them to work independently on their own learning. The teacher in this study had developed this kind of environment and it was this environment that allowed the reading centers to be successful. The literacy activities at reading centers with the collaborative environment they create are a good place to motivate children to be good readers because

they encourage children to enjoy and practice their reading skills through different kinds of activities. The literacy activities in the reading centers should include nurturing goals for each child that are both sensitive and responsive to their needs, such as providing children with an appropriate and comfortable place of reading, and giving them chances to practice and improve different skills of reading in a pleasant, supportive way.

d) *What We Have to Learn from the Teacher in this Study Regarding the Use of Reading Centers for the Observation of Children's Development and Measuring Their Progress*

I believe that the literacy activities at the reading centers in elementary school is the best method for a teacher to take notes, observe and measure the development of the reading skills of the children, both boys and girls. When the children join the literacy activities at the reading centers, they should have pre-tests to set their levels in reading and what they need to improve on while they are in their reading center activities. This means the teacher has to pay close attention to the literacy activities at each of the reading centers and be aware of which centers boys and girls prefer to use. The children's responsiveness to the centers will obviously affect their learning experience positive learning experiences will help them to develop, as they should. After all, the main point is that the teacher will use these literacy activities at the reading centers to improve the reading skills of the boys and girls in her classroom. Reading centers allow for this kind of close attention to student development and need.

VI. CONCLUSION

In short, gender differences in reading performance in school are an interesting subject, and there are many studies about this topic. There are many studies that report females as being better than males in reading skills. On the other hand, there are different studies concluding that boys have more reading skills than girls. In addition, some studies suggest that the culture plays an important role in gender differences in reading. However, in this study, gender differences in reading were not as important a factor because each of the children had special skills depending on his/her ability to learn, and these abilities and their growth as readers were addressed individually. There were differences by gender in responsiveness and engagement in whole group reading activities, particularly with five boys and one girl. Girls on the while, with one exception, were more engaged and responsive in whole group activities. Close to half of the boys struggled to engage during whole group reading time. The gender differences were minimized even further in the reading centers. All of the children responded to the reading centers and the reading

centers were their preferred literacy experience. The same five boys who struggled with engagement during whole group reading time were described by the teacher as needing "more direction" during the reading centers times. The one girl who struggled with engagement during whole group time did not have this difficulty during the reading centers times. All of the children, both boys and girls, enjoyed being at school, enjoyed being in this classroom, and they engaged in the reading centers well, although five boys needed extra direction during reading centers time.

As I look to the future, after reviewing the scholarly literature and conducting this study, I will design special reading programs that incorporate the results of this study in my own practice and in the classrooms of the teachers with whom I work. This means that I will aim to develop a program where a nurturing classroom comes first and then the development of a strong set of teaching materials and reading center plans that respond to the needs of the students is put into place to encourage students of both sexes in the elementary school to develop their reading skills through the cooperative experiences that reading centers have to offer them.

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Appendix A

Teacher Survey

Name:

Date:

Directions: Circle the correct answer for each question below:

1. I am a
 - Female
 - Male
2. My race/ethnicity is
 - African-American
 - Asian/Asian American
 - Caucasian
 - Hispanic
 - Native American
 - Multi-racial/Multi-ethnic
 - Other: Please specify.....
3. My age is
 - 23-27
 - 28-35
 - 36-45
 - 45-54
4. The literacy activities (reading center) play an important role in improving the children's reading in elementary school.
 - Strongly agree
 - Kind of agree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree

5. The literacy activities (reading center) play an important role in improving the girl's reading in elementary school.
 - Strongly agree
 - Kind of agree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree
6. The literacy activities (reading center) play an important role in improving the boy's reading in elementary school.
 - Strongly agree
 - Kind of agree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree
7. Children benefit from the literacy activities (reading center) in developing their reading skills in elementary school.
 - Strongly agree
 - Kind of agree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree
8. The teacher's observations of children during literacy activities (at the reading center) guides teacher's improvement of methods in elementary school.
 - Strongly agree
 - Kind of agree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree
9. The literacy activities (reading center) help children become good readers in elementary school.
 - Strongly agree
 - Kind of agree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree
10. The teacher can successfully encourage the children to benefit from their literacy activities (reading center) in elementary school.
 - Strongly agree
 - Kind of agree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree
11. The boys respond to your encouragement with literacy activities (the reading center) differently than the girls.
 - Strongly agree
 - Kind of agree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree

Please explain your answer to Question 11 above:

12. There is a relationship between developing the children's reading skills and their involvement with literacy activities (the reading center) in my classroom.
 - Strongly agree
 - Kind of agree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree

13. There are differences in the boys' responses to the literacy activities (reading center) when compared to their responses during the general reading class.
 - Strongly agree
 - Kind of agree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree
14. There are differences in the girls' responses to the literacy activities (reading center) when compared to their responses during the general reading class.
 - Strongly agree
 - Kind of agree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree
15. Which of the children's reading skills improve through their involvement in literacy activities (the reading center) in your classroom?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for answer the survey questions

Appendix B

Teacher Interview Protocol

Name:

Date:

1. How do the reading activities that you have in this classroom improve the children's reading skills in elementary school?

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.....

.....

2. Which are the reading skills the girls may develop through their literacy activities in your classroom?

.....

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.....

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3. Which t are the reading skills the boys may develop through their literacy activities in your classroom?

.....

.....

.....

4. Is there a difference between the ways in which the girls respond to the literacy activities as compared to the boys?

.....

.....

.....

5. What kinds of materials in the reading center develop the children's reading skills in elementary school?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for answering these questions

Appendix C

Children's Interview Protocol

Name:

Date:

1. What do you prefer—your special literacy activities (reading center) or your general reading classes? Why?
.....
.....
.....
2. What do you feel when you participate in the special literacy activities (reading center) in your classroom? Why do you think you feel this way?
.....
.....
.....
3. Do you enjoy reading in during the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why or Why not?
.....
.....
.....
4. What do you like about the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why?
.....
.....
.....
5. What do you choose to do during the special literacy activity choices (reading center choices)?
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for answering these questions

Appendix D

Results of Teacher Survey

Name:

Date: 2/12/201

Directions: Circle the correct answer for each question below:

1. I am a

☒

Female

☐

Male

2. My race/ethnicity is

☒

African-American

☐

Asian/Asian American

☐

Caucasian

☐

Hispanic

☐

Native American

☐

Multi-racial/Multi-

☐

Other: Please specify.....

3. My age is

☐ 23-27

☐ 28-35

☐ 36-45

☒ 45-54

4. The literacy activities (reading center) play an important role in improving the children's reading in elementary school.

☒ Strongly agree

☐ Kind of agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Totally disagree

5. The literacy activities (reading center) play an important role in improving the girl's reading in elementary school.

☒ Strongly agree

☐ Kind of agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Totally disagree

6. The literacy activities (reading center) play an important role in improving the boy's reading in elementary school.

☒ Strongly agree

☐ Kind of agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Totally disagree

7. Children benefit from the literacy activities (reading center) in developing their reading skills in elementary school.

☒ Strongly agree

☐ Kind of agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Totally disagree

8. The teacher's observations of children during literacy activities (at the reading center) guides teacher's improvement of methods in elementary school.

- ☒ Strongly agree
- ☐ Kind of agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Totally disagree

9. The literacy activities (reading center) help children become good readers in elementary school.

- ☒ Strongly agree
- ☐ Kind of agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Totally disagree

10. The teacher can successfully encourage the children to benefit from their literacy activities (reading center) in elementary school.

- ☒ Strongly agree
- ☐ Kind of agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Totally disagree

11. The boys respond to your encouragement with literacy activities (the reading center) differently than the girls.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☒ Kind of agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Totally disagree

Please explain your answer to Question 11 above: I think it depends on the academic level as well the social behavior of the student.

12. There is a relationship between developing the children's reading skills and their involvement with literacy activities (the reading center) in my classroom.

- ☒ Strongly agree
- ☐ Kind of agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Totally disagree

13. There are differences in the boys' responses to the literacy activities (reading center) when compared to their responses during the general reading class.

☐

Strongly agree

☒

Kind of agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Totally disagree

Please explain your answer to Question 13 above: The boys who are low in reading usually need much guidance going through the centers and staying task in the centers.

14. There are differences in the girls' responses to the literacy activities (reading center) when compared to their responses during the general reading class.

☒

Strongly agree

☐

Kind of agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Totally disagree

Please explain your answer to Question 14 above: The girls generally enjoy working through activities together.

15. Which of the children's reading skills improve through their involvement in literacy activities (the reading center) in your classroom?

The children who were strategic and benchmark on the Dibels at the beginning of the year usually show 2 or 3 whole years or more growth,

Thank you for answer the survey questions

Appendix E

Result of Teacher Interview Protocol

Name: Date: 2/12/2013

1. How do the reading activities that you have in this classroom improve the children's reading skills in elementary school?

By the last Dibels test 90% of my students will have excelled 2 to 3 grade levels in reading.

2. Which are the reading skills the girls may develop through their literacy activities in your classroom?

- More independent in reading activities—comprehension
- understand and interpret stories—respond to questions
- recognize new word using phonics—fluency
- follow written directions—can retell main idea
- sequencing events—reading compound words and contractions

3. Which are the reading skills the boys may develop through their literacy activities in your classroom?

- Reading skills
- Reading comprehension
- Using phonics for new words
- follow written directions
- sequencing main ideas
- Respond to questions.

- Reading to self center—read an accelerated [book]
 - Reading book—fill out log sheet on narrative elements finally take an AR test on computer
 - Fry word checker game, vowel consonant and word pattern game
4. Is there a difference between the ways in which the girls respond to the literacy activities as compared to the boys?

Some of my boys and girls are more task oriented and somewhat more mature than 5 of my boys who are either intensive or strategic in reading and need to be guided through the centers. These boys are more impulsive.

5. What kinds of materials in the reading center develop the children's reading skills in elementary school?

- Fry Phrases
- Making sentences
- Reading short passages and identifying main ideas, sequencing events, making predictions, inferences, identifying the narrative elements and more.

Thank you for answering these questions

Appendix F

Results of Children's Interview Protocol

Interview (Student 1)

Question 1

Interviewer: What do you prefer—your special literacy activities (reading center) or your general reading classes?

Student 1: Literacy

Interviewer: Why?

Student 1: Because it's fun. Cause I get to learn new things.

Interviewer: Give me an example of what you learn in literacy?

Student 1: Handwriting, writing, reading.

Question 2

Interviewer: What do you feel when you participate in the special literacy activities (reading center) in your classroom? Why do you think you feel this way?

Student 1: I feel happy and confident about myself because sometimes it seems easy, and sometimes it feels hard and in the end I pass most of the time.

Question 3

Interviewer: Do you enjoy reading during the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why or why not?

Student 1: Because I learn new things and new words when people help me.

Question 4

Interviewer: What do you like about the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why?

Student 1: I like it. It feels like playing. It doesn't feel like learning.

Interviewer: Which activities do you like?

Student 1: The first center. It's where my group sits at the table and Ms. Tompkins will tell us something to do. It's mostly reading. Right now we're reading a book it's called *The Boxcar Children*.

Question 5

Interviewer: What do you choose to do during the special literacy activity choices (reading center choices)?

Student 1: Reading, reading higher levels.

Interview (Student 2)

Question 1

Interviewer: What do you prefer—your special literacy activities (reading center) or your general reading classes? Why?

Student 2: Activities.

Interviewer: Why?

Student 2: I like to read to them and it's like more quiet. Because when it's noisy I can't read the words because it's too loud

Question 2

Interviewer: What do you feel when you participate in the special literacy activities (reading center) in your classroom? Why do you think you feel this way?

Student 2: Happy

Interviewer: Why?

Student 2: I learn new things.

Interviewer: Give me an example.

Student 2: Maybe something about reading. Something that I don't know about and I can learn about it. Like when I read about animals...I didn't know about like where they go and stuff.

Question 3

Interviewer: Do you enjoy reading during the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why or why not?

Student 2: Yes (nodded her head). I enjoy the books about how the books are telling about animals and how they live.

Question 4

Interviewer: What do you like about the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why?

Student 2: I like reading. I like the reading center with Ms. Tompkins.

Question 5

Interviewer: What do you choose to do during the special literacy activity choices (reading center choices)?

Student 2: I choose the books.

Interview (Student 3)

Question 1

Interviewer: What do you prefer—your special literacy activities (reading center) or your general reading classes?

Student 3: Reading centers.

Interviewer: Why?

Student 3: Because we can read by ourselves and figure out words by ourselves to learn how to read.

Question 2

Interviewer: What do you feel when you participate in the special literacy activities (reading center) in your classroom? Why do you think you feel this way?

Student 3: Happy

Interviewer: Why?

Student 3: Because I get to be with my friends.

Question 3

Interviewer: Do you enjoy reading during the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why or why not?

Student 3: Yes

Interviewer: Why?

Student 3: We can read much faster. To learn longer words.

Question 4

Interviewer: What do you like about the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why?

Student 3: Reading the books. Talking with people about what I read.

Question 5

Interviewer: What do you choose to do during the special literacy activity choices (reading center choices)?

Student 3: Reading a book and taking the AR Test.

Interview (Student 4)**Question 1**

Interviewer: What do you prefer—your special literacy activities (reading center) or your general reading classes?

Student 4: Activity.

Interviewer: Why?

Student 4: Because you get a choice, you could read, you could do science, you can play.

Question 2

Interviewer: What do you feel when you participate in the special literacy activities (reading center) in your classroom? Why do you think you feel this way?

Student 4: Happy Why? Because sometimes we get to do partners, and if we do partners and we don't know what to do we can write it down and try to figure it out.

Question 3

Interviewer: Do you enjoy reading during the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why or why not?

Student 4: Yes.

Interviewer: What?

Student 4: Because it helps you learn. You learn new words. If you need help with something you can look in a book and find the answer.

Question 4

Interviewer: What do you like about the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why?

Student 4: You get to learn and get smarter as you learn.

Question 5

Interviewer: What do you choose to do during the special literacy activity choices (reading center choices)?

Student 4: Reading and writing is my favorite activity.

Interview (Student 5)

Question 1

Interviewer: What do you prefer—your special literacy activities (reading center) or your general reading classes?

Student 5: Small group activities

Interviewer: Why?

Student 5: Because so I can read to them, to Jasmine, my reading partner. I like to read books.

Question 2

Interviewer: What do you feel when you participate in the special literacy activity (reading center) in your classroom? Why do you think you feel this way?

Student 5: Happy.

Interviewer: Why?

Student 5: Because we both read to each other and we then we pick different books and then we read to each other.

Question 3

Interviewer: Do you enjoy reading during the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why or why not?

Student 5: Yes.

Interviewer: Why?

Student 5: Cause we both love reading.

Question 4

Interviewer: What do you like about the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why?

Student 5: Reading books. Reading to the teacher and the teacher calls on us and we answer the questions.

Question 5

Interviewer: What do you choose to do during the special literacy activity choices (reading center choices)?

Student 5: Games. Reading about numbers. I like reading about meals.

[Note: I connected this to a class activity that they had focused on reading a book about Chinese New Year that included special meals for the holiday and this student participated in the discussion a lot, talking about her favorite meals.

She told us her favorite meal is pizza].

Interview (Student 6)

Question 1

Interviewer: What do you prefer—your special literacy activities (reading center) or your general reading classes?

Student 6: Small groups.

Interviewer: Why?

Student 6: I like taking them because instead of just having partners. We all do it in our small groups (in whole group we have partners) and we change some of the rules.

Interviewer: What are the rules?

Student 6: Since there are more people playing, we play it in a different way.

Question 2

Interviewer: What do you feel when you participate in the special literacy activities (reading center) in your classroom? Why do you think you feel this way?

Student 6: I don't ever get nervous. I feel normal, but I don't want to rush, because I know most of them already. I usually get done before a lot of other students so I have time to check my work.

Question 3

Interviewer: Do you enjoy reading during the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why or why not?

Student 6: I do because I like to read and to choose the levels in my reading. The books I choose they like they are very interesting and from the library. They're just different from the other books we have.

Question 4

Interviewer: What do you like about the special literacy activities (reading center)? Why?

Student 6: I am in a high level. It's like the reading level, the numbers. I'm in one of the highest. I'm in 7.6. I like to because I can read more and more books as I get higher. I like that we are allowed to have partners. I like the test, we read the books and listen to the books and take tests on the books to see if we understand the book. It tells if we pay attention and our scores are some of our grades. I p like the word game, it's kind of like a crossword.

Question 5

Interviewer: What do you choose to do during the special literacy activity choices (reading center choices)?

Student 6: I like language arts we read and write about it. We work on suffixes of words and we have the papers of the language arts are actually kind of fun. Question 5 Student 6 cont.

Student 6: We have to look at the book for different words that it says. If it has "ing" suffix and then add it to the end.



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The Day a Woman can Walk Freely on the Roads, that Day we can Say that India Achieved Independence: Lessons to be Learned from Mahatma Gandhi's Saying

By Alemnew Gebeyehu Dessie

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Abstract- Nowadays, each and every state person, state, and other stakeholders in every country run to add something useful to its country. And in the twenty century an abrupt activity was fight for independence. Among the many India is the one. In such struggle, the mere dream/whim of freeing mother/father land from colonial and other kind of dominations was common in the world. By the time such fighters have already forgotten, and/or gave less emphasis to domestic issues though usually this action is not deliberate and well contemplated. Among the multifarious domestic issues the one and the most sensitizing was independence of women. And this kind of independence is the foundation and an indispensable tool to erect the nation/countrywide independence. Having disregarded such ideal means to change ones country to a better place someday, many has sustained failures and their struggle become full of ups and downs.

Keywords: *independence, women's empowerment, freedom, and declaring independence.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Although Gandhi had spoken about many years ago, in the twenty century; he had realized and shown us that independence starts from home. That is women's independence. Gandhi's approach by that time was a dualistic and comprehensive for two reasons: first, he had believed, worked and succeed in liberating women at home. This is the prime and foundational thing to declare national independence of India from British rule. Second, it is the fruit of the first reason that Gandhi had reinforced his struggle to

independence of India by uniting women to the track of his and his colleagues endeavor so as to be more powerful than ever. For this justification the salt march was an exemplary. So, what Gandhi has laid is a great and blossom concept of independence, prior domestic/home independence of women. And this is one of the unique achievements of Gandhi which can be an everlasting teaching legacy to the global community in general and India in particular.

When we see the following note, it gives us a reasonable and persuading answer why Gandhi was able to do that astonishing miracle by his time, what type of belief and knowledge of independence did he hold. For this the note reads as follows:

*"Both men and women are of equal rank, but they are not identical. They are peerless pair, being supplementary to one another, each helping the other so that without the one the existence of the other cannot be conceived. The concept of self is the most important factor affecting the behavior of women. Self-realization of the potential of women was severely restricted in the pre-independence period due to various socio-cultural conditions and conditioning."*¹

The basic reason behind the failures and hardships on the road to get independence for long periods of time is for most countries is the jumping to national, or territorial independence leaving the home, women independence. So, what we can understand from Gandhi's saying is that anyone who wishes, or committed to undergoes fight for independence first should have to clean his home. Not only Gandhi, but also one of his colleagues had depicted an in-depth Knowledge of women's freedom and great contribution if they are involved in the fight for independence. So, let us see the following letter wrote by Gandhi's intimate partner to her young and lovely girl/daughter. It reads as follows:

Source 1: Letter Sarojini Naidu wrote to her daughter Leilamani Naidu, March 4, 1921

"Only remember that you are an Indian girl and that puts upon you a heavier burden than if you were an

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*English girl born to a heritage of freedom. Remember that you have to help India to be free and the children of tomorrow to be free-born citizens of a free land, therefore—if you are true to your country's need you must recognize the responsibility of your Indian womanhood. Nothing in your speech or action should cause the progress of Indian women to suffer; nothing in you should give room for wretched reactionary slave-minds to say, "This comes of giving too much education and freedom to our women." Think over it my darling. You are not free—one is—in the sense of being a law unto yourself in defiance of all existing tradition in our country—for freedom is the heaviest bondage in one sense—since it entails duties, responsibilities and opportunities from which slaves are immune... Noblesse oblige! And the ampler the liberty the narrower the right to do as one pleases. And you my friend of delight...you must shine as a foremost gem in the crown of India's freedom....You have in you all the seeds of true greatness: be great my little child, fulfill yourself nobly in accordance with all the profound and beautiful impulses and ideals of your nature...but always remembering that you are the symbol of India."*²

Not only the above belief of Gandhi asserts the freedom of women as a manifestation of India's national independence, but also he had a belief women are brave to resist violence, due to this he was said to be feminist. The note reads as follows too:

"Gandhi's 'feminism' - though that is not a term that he used - is also of interest today in shifting the focus from the transformation of women to the transformation of men. In the Indian context his concern for the position of women in society was ahead of his time. He was impressed when in England by the courage and dedication of the suffragettes, although he did not approve of their occasional resort to violence. And when women responded to his call in South Africa and India, showing themselves as willing as the men to face violent police action and jail, Gandhi saw that they had an unique contribution to make. He was quick to see that women could become the leader in the Satyagraha which does not require the learning that books give but does require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith. Further, because for Gandhi true liberation always went much further than political independence, to the humane transformation of society, he believed that by taking part in the nationalist struggle, women of India could break out of their long imposed seclusion. His conception of the kind of gender revolution that is needed was novel in his time. For the wholehearted adoption of non- violence can be seen as making for a gentler and less aggressive masculinity. Sushila

*Gidwani puts the point challengingly in this way: 'Indian feminism aims at changing men to become qualitatively more feminine while modern feminism aims at changing women to become qualitatively more masculine'."*³

From the above note we can understand that women are determined in the struggle to combat any actions hindering violence, like challenges posed by the police as Gandhi has witnessed. And this condition is an additional and meritorious behavior of women essential to change. Having ignored such marvelous natural endowment of our mothers, sisters, and friends (simply women); the end of the struggle to become independent, or sovereign an inevitably amounts to crisis. That was what Gandhi experimented in his observation empirically.

Let us see one practical scenario in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is the sole independent country which fiercely and astonishingly defeated the fascist Italians during 1930's and 40's. But when we see its economical advancement and developmental transformation, sadly she is among the least developed countries in the world still now. Actually, Ethiopians should be deserted a great deal of admirations and respect for their determination and exciting victory over the Italians when we see from the perspective of safeguarding the national respect, honor, dignity, solidarity, identity...etc multifarious advantages, but that great success was not comprehensive and long lastingly effective. Anyway Ethiopians are under stagnant economic growth. When we ask ourselves why this is so, it is related to exclusion of women in their endeavor to independence. Due to this, women were not learned, participated, not experienced. Simply they remain idle; as such they stay dormant for a century, being home workers, child bearers...etc burdensome tasks in the house. This is unduly horrible to themselves more specifically and to their motherland wholly. It is not denied that Empress Taitu Bitul was the fore fronted war leaders at Adwa against Fascist Italians, but she was the only woman that accomplished a distinct victory. Other women were not involved in the fight as the Empress too, although they may have their own contribution to the victory. Anyhow, any public issue women were not involved is laborious, mere lose, and failure, or defeat. And even succeed in whatever means it doesn't result further fruits as Ethiopia. So, what Gandhi said and achieved is short of words to forward admirations of his thinking and experimentation of women's freedom/liberty is the base and prominent supportive thing to independence. Then, whatever country, even Ethiopia has not any independence still now unless women are independent, or being freed at home.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Anyway, states, groups or individuals engaged in the work for independence will not be successful from

their very start unless they include women in the right side. So, what Gandhi had shown us that he was able to free India from British rule having recognized much contributions of their participation, talent and merits in changing ones country status to a glorious one. Finally it is possible and apt to say one state, or entity is independent, first it is better to investigate the lives of women at domestic arena. Then, our assertion is dependent on the women independence.

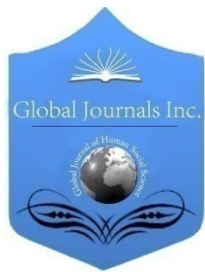
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An Impact Assessment of Academic Disciplines on Secondary School Teachers' Dispositions to Affective Characteristics in Cross River State, Nigeria

By Egaga, Patrick I., Isaac O. Ubi & Peter U. Bassey

University of Calabar, Nigeria

Abstract- The study was an assessment of teachers' academic disciplines and their dispositions to some affective characteristics like values orientation, work attitude, motivation, and needs satisfaction. The study which adopted survey design used a sample of 1062 teachers selected from an estimated population of 21,240 teachers spread across the 203 public secondary schools in Cross River State of Nigeria. An instrument called Teachers' Affective Characteristics Questionnaire was used for data collection. The data were analysed using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test statistic. Results of the study showed that teachers' academic disciplines significantly influence their dispositions to affective characteristics. It was concluded that, it was teachers with education disciplines that were more disposed to affective characteristics than their counterparts with non-education disciplines. The study concludes that teachers should be encouraged to pick higher degrees in education after their first degrees as this will improve their work values, work attitude, motivation and needs satisfaction (also considered in this study as job satisfaction).

Keywords: *impact assessment, academic disciplines, secondary school teachers' affective characteristics..*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education, at all levels, is seen as a tool by which a nation can achieve its goal of national development and economic transformation. It is a veritable tool that can be used in nurturing human growth. In Nigeria, education is overseen by the ministry of education whether at the federal or state levels, while the implementation of policy for state controlled public schools is handled by the individual states. When properly handled, with every player in the team putting in enough effort, the goal for which educational institutions are established would be achieved maximally. It is however disheartening to note that, in recent times, the educational system, especially at primary and secondary school levels, have suffered a setback due to lack of committed teachers (We rang, 2014). This is not

supposed to be so. Given the facts that, without a well run school system no nation can make adequate impact on national development and that no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers, one can say that teachers' should be as facilitators and transmitters of societal values through their commitment in teaching and other duties to which their profession has called them.

Accordingly also, Denga (1996) has earlier pondered on the need for workers motivation and job satisfaction, stressing that job satisfaction is so central and basic to job performance and general behaviour that it will be pantomimic and to a large extent fictive to talk of high productivity without an adequate consideration of the inner forces that stimulate a worker to action. Some of these forces he articulates may be their dispositions to affective characteristics that come to play in their day-to-day undertakings in the school. The secondary school teacher should be a professional whose job requires high intelligence, concentration, dedication and commitment. His job involves teaching his students, evaluating them, maintaining discipline among the students and counselling them. The teacher is equally expected to motivate the students and take part in all school extra-curricular activities. Unfortunately, it is seemingly looking as though there are some teachers who are nonchalant, less interested and less committed to their duties.

In the past decades, several theoretical frameworks have been proposed for studying teachers' job performance. A very recent one is Zhang (2015) who contended that an employee's commitment to an organization can be understood as affective. The study defined affective commitment as concerning employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. This by implication motivates the teacher to make effort to assist in reaching overall good performance of the school he finds himself. One very important aspect of teachers' affective characteristics is their values orientation in which ever school subject they teach. Studies comparing academic discipline of teachers and their values orientation seem to be very few. In a study by Behets (2001) on values

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orientation of physical education teachers it was discovered that the type of teaching degree related significantly to difference in values orientation. It was discovered that the higher the professional degree held by the teacher, the more positive was his values orientation.

Teaching is an art and the quality of teaching depends on the love, dedication and devotion of the teacher towards the subject his/her primary assignment (Bhalla, Jajoo & Kalantre, 2002). This makes it obvious that teaching is a function of work attitude. Ogott and Odera (2012) studied some factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards work and discovered that high professional qualifications had positive influence on teachers' attitude and vice-versa towards language material selection, development and use in educational programmes.

Teacher education in any country has to face the challenges of producing teachers for a new society on whom the future of the nation depends. Needs satisfaction, sometimes referred to as job satisfaction is of great significance in this direction. When a teacher is happy with his job, the role becomes more pivotal in uplifting the society. The study of Srivastava and Chabra (2012) on the interplay of gender and qualification on job satisfaction show that qualification was significant in affecting the needs satisfaction of teachers.

II. METHODOLOGY

The design adopted in this study was survey. This design was chosen because of the largeness of the sample size and the fact that the team used questionnaires in collecting data required for the study. A sample of 1062 teachers was selected from a population of about 21,240 teachers in state public schools. At the time of this research, the state ministry of education was concluding recruitment of teachers, so it was difficult to be exact on the number of teachers on the roll. By this selection, however, the study adopted about 5% of the population as sample. The sampling techniques used for selecting the sample were stratified random and purposive sampling techniques with the different Local Government Education Authorities as the basis of stratification. Each of the 18 education authorities was considered as a stratum. Five per cent of the number of schools in each education authority was selected for the study. After the selection of schools, the researchers selected the teachers purposely from the schools, at convenience, to meet the 5% target.

The study area was Cross River State of Nigeria. The state is made up of 18 education authorities (one each in each local government, area). The area is made up of 203 public secondary schools with Calabar education authority having the highest number of schools. Before the year 2000, Cross River State was rated as an educationally less developed state (ELDS).

The rating has since the beginning of the 21st century changed as the state begun to be rated as advantaged educationally.

The instruments used for the study was a questionnaire called Teachers' Affective Characteristics Questionnaire (TACQ). The questionnaire was made up of two selections. The demographic items of the instrument constituted section 'A', eliciting information on sex, work experience, academic disciplines, and subject taught. Section B was made up of four affective characteristics, namely; values orientation, work attitude, motivation and needs satisfaction. Each of the variables was measured on a four-point Likert-type scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was face validated by the research team and trail tested for internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate method. The reliability coefficients for the sub-scales ranged from 0.71 to 0.86.

III. RESULT

The hypothesis tested stated that teachers' disposition to affective characteristics like values orientation, work attitude, motivation, and needs satisfaction do not differ significantly based on their academic disciplines.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is teachers' academic disciplines categorized into three dimensions, namely; First Degree in Education (B.Ed or Equivalent) Degree in other disciplines including post graduate diploma in education (PGDE or equivalent), and First Degree in any area outside education (BA/B.Sc or equivalent). The dependent variable is teachers disposition to affective characteristics like values orientation, work attitude, motivation, and needs satisfaction. One-way analysis of variable (ANOVA) was used in testing the hypothesis. See the results in Tables 1 and 2.

Results of analysis in Table 2 show that the calculated F-ratios for values orientation (27.283), work attitude (24.140), motivation (18.675), needs satisfaction (11.056), and for overall disposition to affective characteristics (30.878) are each greater than the critical F-ratio of 3.00 at 0.05 level of significance using 2 and 1059 degrees of freedom. This means that at all dimensions of consideration, teachers' disposition to affective characteristics' differ significantly. Based on their academic disciplines, based on the results, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 1 : Summary of descriptive statistics for the influence of teachers' academic disciplines on their disposition to affective characteristics

S/N	Disposition to affective characteristic	Academic discipline	N	\bar{X}	SD
1	Values orientation	B.Ed or Equivalent	121	17.94	2.26
		PGDE or Equivalent	800	18.24	2.77
		B.A/B.Sc or Equivalent	141	16.35	3.34
		Total	1062	17.96	2.87
2	Work attitude	B.Ed or Equivalent	121	18.66	2.47
		PGDE or Equivalent	800	19.48	2.62
		B.A, B.Sc or Equivalent	141	17.80	3.73
		Total	1062	19.16	2.84
3	Motivation	B.Ed or Equivalent	121	17.86	2.83
		PGDE or Equivalent	800	19.12	3.10
		B.A, B.Sc or Equivalent	141	17.65	3.91
		Total	1062	18.78	3.24
4	Needs stratification	B.Ed or Equivalent	121	16.62	2.96
		PGDE or Equivalent	800	16.81	2.81
		B.A, B.Sc or Equivalent	141	15.53	3.88
		Total	1062	16.62	3.02
5	Overall disposition to affective characteristics	B.Ed or Equivalent	121	71.07	7.21
		PGDE or Equivalent	800	73.65	8.40
		B.A, B.Sc or Equivalent	141	67.32	13.30
		Total	1062	72.52	9.34

Table 2 : One-way ANOVA for the influence of teachers' academic disciplines on disposition to affective characteristics

S/N	Disposition to affective characteristic	Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F
1	Values orientation	Between	428.488	2	214.244	27.283
		Within	8315.954	1059	7.853	
		Total	8744.497	1061		
2	Work attitude	Between	372.581	2	186.290	24.140*
		Within	8172.494	1059	7.717	
		Total	8545.077	1061		
3	Motivation	Between	380.507	2	190.254	18.675*
		Within	10788.613	1059	10.188	
		Total	11169.121	1061		
4	Needs stratification	Between	197.991	2	98.996	11.056*
		Within	9482.663	1059	8.954	
		Total	9680.655	1061		
5	Overall /disposition to Characteristics	Between	5096.201	2	2548.100	30.878*
		Within	87390.654	1059	82.522	
		Total	92486.854	1061		

* $p < .05$, critical $F = 3.00$

Since the results show significant influence of academic discipline on teachers' disposition to affective characteristics, a post-hoc test was carried out to determine the pair-wise mean difference(s) among the groups that was or were responsible for the influence. The method of post-hoc analysis used was fisher's least significant difference (LSD). Results of the analysis are presented in Table 3.

Results of analysis in Table 3 show the pair-wise mean comparison among groups are as follows:

Values orientation: The t-values for comparisons between teachers with B.Ed versus BA/B.Sc ($t=4.58$),

and PGDE versus BA/B.Sc ($t=7.38$) were each greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.5 level of significance. This indicate significant difference among the groups and shows that the significant influence noticed in the study in relation to this sub-variable was as a result of the pair-wise difference among the means of the groups as indicated above. Results of mean values in table 2 show that, it was teachers with PGDE ($X = 18.24$) who exhibited a better disposition for values orientation than their counterparts, followed by their counterparts with B.Ed ($X = 17.94$) and then by those without education degrees ($X = 16.35$).

Work attitude: The t-values for B.Ed versus PGDE ($t = 3.06$), B.Ed versus B.A/B.Sc ($t = 2.53$), and PGDE versus B.A/B.Sc ($t = 6.76$) were each greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.5 level of significance. This means that there is significant difference among all the groups. The mean values for these sub-scales indicate that, teachers with PGDE ($X = 19.48$) exhibited a better disposition for work attitude than their counterparts with B.Ed ($X = 18.66$), and those with B.A/B.Sc ($X = 17.80$).

Motivation: Significant difference were noticed in the comparison between B.Ed versus PGDE ($t = 3.95$), and PGDE versus B.A/B.Sc ($t = 5.15$). The results of mean values also indicate that teachers with PGDE ($X = 19.12$) were better than those with B.Ed ($X = 17.86$) and B.A/B.Sc ($X = 17.65$) in their disposition to motivation.

Table 3 : Fisher's LSD for teachers' disposition to affective characteristics based on their academic discipline

S/N	Disposition to affective characteristics	Academic disciplines	1 (n=121)	2 (n=800)	3 (n=141)
1	Values orientation	B.Ed. or equivalent (1)	17.94 ^a	0.30 ^b	1.59
		PGDE or equivalent (2)	1.10 ^c	18.24	1.89
		B.A, B.Sc or equiv. (3)	4.58*	7.38*	16.35
		(MSW=7.717)			
2	Work attitude	B.Ed. or equivalent (1)	18.66	0.82	0.86
		PGDE or equivalent (2)	3.06*	19.48	1.68
		B.A, B.Sc or equiv. (3)	2.53*	6.76*	17.80
		(MSW=7.717)			
3	Motivation	B.Ed. or equivalent (1)	17.86	1.26	0.21
		PGDE or equivalent (2)	3.95*	19.12	1.47
		B.A, B.Sc or equiv. (3)	0.54	5.15*	17.65
		(MSW=10.188)			
4	Needs stratification	B.Ed. or equivalent (1)	16.62	0.19	1.09
		PGDE or equivalent (2)	0.63	16.81	1.28
		B.A, B.Sc or equiv. (3)	2.97*	4.78*	15.53
		(MSW=8.954)			
5	Overall /disposition to affective characteristics	B.Ed. or equivalent (1)	71.07	2.58	3.75
		PGDE or equivalent (2)	2.84*	73.65	6.33
		B.A, B.Sc or equiv. (3)	3.37*	7.79*	67.32
		(MSW=82.522)			

* $P < .05$

a) Group means are along the principal diagonals

b) Differences among group means are above the principal diagonals

c) t-values are below the principal diagonals.

Needs satisfaction: Significant difference were observed in the comparison between B.Ed versus B.A/B.Sc ($t=2.97$), and PGDE versus B.A/B.Sc ($t=4.78$). Mean values for the sub-scales indicate that it was teachers with PGDE ($X=16.81$) that were better in disposition to needs satisfaction than their counterparts with B.Ed ($X = 16.62$). And those with B.A/B.Sc ($X = 15.53$).

Results on overall disposition to affective characteristics show significant differences among all mean comparisons. The mean values show that teachers with PGDE ($X=73.65$) exhibited better dispositions to affective characteristics than their counterparts with B.Ed ($X=71.07$) and B.A/B.Sc ($X=67.32$).

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Results of the study on the comparison between teachers' academic disciplines qualifications

and their dispositions to affective characteristics reveal significant influence of all levels and dimensions of consideration. The results show that teachers' dispositions to affective characteristics are influenced by their academic disciplines. The comparisons shows that teachers who hold PGDE or its equivalent were different from those who hold B.Ed degrees or equivalent and those who do not hold education degrees (B.A/B.Sc or equivalent) in their values orientation, work attitude, motivation and needs satisfaction. The results show that it was teachers with PGDE that were better in their dispositions to these characteristics than their counterparts who have only B.Ed and B.A/B.Sc or equivalent. This finding was also true of the results when academic disciplines of teachers were compared using overall disposition to affective characteristics. The finding replicate those of Behets (2001), Ogott and Odera (2012). The study of Behet (2001) on values

orientation of physical education teachers revealed that the type of teaching degree related significantly to difference in values orientation. The two authorities agree that, the higher the teacher's professional qualification the better his values orientation, work attitude, motivation to work and job satisfaction which in this present study is considered as needs satisfaction. The nature of the findings and their replication by the present study are not difficult to explain. Any person with a higher degree should be more exposed given the length of time he/she has spent studying. The person must have encountered some life experiences which his colleagues with lower degrees may not have encountered. During such experiences the person may take life decisions that may possibly change his orientation to work. In the secondary school system PGDE degrees are usually taken by teachers who have already graduated in other fields and wish to consolidate their employment as teachers and those who have lower classes of education degrees but wish to study further. Such teachers, most often, have already made up their minds to stay in the job, thus their likelihood to have positive dispositions to some affective characteristics. The study of Srivastava and Chabra (2012) shows this interplay of qualification and needs satisfaction as a matter that has to do with readiness of the teacher concerned to stay on the job.

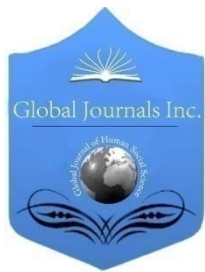
The implication of this finding to secondary school education is that teachers need higher degrees. The study recommends that teachers with first degrees should be encouraged to pick Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) degrees to consolidate their professionalism. Those teachers who now have PGDE degrees may still require picking Master's and Doctorate degrees to keep enhancing their perfect existence in the school system. Government should create such awareness and enabling environment for teachers to go for further studies. Universities should include enough courses in psychology into their bench marks for higher degrees as this will enhance understanding of trainees' behaviour change with regards to those affective characteristics.

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The Relationship between IT Consumption and Stress in Pakistani Youth

By Sehrish Mobeen & Bushra Mussawar

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Abstract- Information technology is surprisingly influenced our daily routines; but side by side it also generate many questions on the health issues. Inconsistent and uneven IT utilization is very significantly related to many psychological problems including the issues of stress as well. Though in Pakistani culture concerns related to IT were not counted into serious considerations, the following study was aimed to investigate the association between IT consumption and stress among the Pakistani youth. 200 participants age ranged between 16-24 has been conveniently selected from 4 different cities of Pakistan. A demographic information questionnaire and Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) was used for data collection. Hypothesis of the study was that high use of IT will lead to higher stress level in Pakistani youth. The results of the study also support the hypothesis significantly and previous literature also incorporates with the existing results.

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The Relationship between IT Consumption and Stress in Pakistani Youth

Sehrish Mobeen^a & Bushra Mussawar^o

Abstract- Information technology is surprisingly influenced our daily routines; but side by side it also generate many questions on the health issues. Inconsistent and uneven IT utilization is very significantly related to many psychological problems including the issues of stress as well. Though in Pakistani culture concerns related to IT were not counted into serious considerations, the following study was aimed to investigate the association between IT consumption and stress among the Pakistani youth. 200 participants age ranged between 16-24 has been conveniently selected from 4 different cities of Pakistan. A demographic information questionnaire and Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) was used for data collection. Hypothesis of the study was that high use of IT will lead to higher stress level in Pakistani youth. The results of the study also support the hypothesis significantly and previous literature also incorporates with the existing results.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since centuries IT has been questioned about its pros and cons. Although this revolution civilized the humans by making their lives smooth and simple, as today performing the duties with the help of IT is very convenient. But beside these entire benefits one cannot ignore its negativity, as its repetitive use also building an imprisoned concept and manner in humans. No doubt IT benefited its users with a multiple confirmatory guidance, but on the other hand there are still many areas which are badly affected with the uneven exercise of IT. A lot of literature point out the negative face of IT. Every day constant modification and innovations in IT is persistently affecting the concepts of mutual sharing, gatherings, social settings, collaborations and interactions. It is widely believed by many researchers that in the list of reasons which created many social issues IT are among one of them (Hacker & Barden, 1987).

Innovations especially in the field of IT diverted or mold a person's ordinary life into complexities by continuous interference, as this also lead towards the alteration of a person belief system as well as his thinking patterns. The discoveries which were created to make an individual's existence easy now added up a component of stress. A huge heap of faxes emails and voice mails really create an irritation and frustration; infuriating ringing of mobile phones. A phenomenon of Techno stress is also an optional term for a condition of

cognition and cortical arousal observed in individuals who heavily depend on IT for the accomplishment of their duties and assigned tasks. It is strongly believed by the researchers that in job places psychosomatic syndrome prominently increased in future, because of the rapid innovations and present inconsistent IT usage (Arnets & Wiholm, 1997). In the last few decades the exaggerated utilization of modern technology is noticeably observed approximately in all areas of life. Un able to use and utilize modern technology by old people like mobile phones, computers, and internet convey meaning and perception in them that they are no more competent and cannot play their role purposefully (Czaja & Lee, 2007). IT wrath or issues of temperaments related to technology (Fiehn, 2010) were prominent when an individual come to know or develop the understanding of unskilled or incompetent to deal out or tackle with the demands of advanced technology. As a result person is being enforced to expand his/her time duration and attempt in order to conceptualize the complexities connected with the utilization of upcoming novel and innovative technology. These factors will lead towards the state of irritation and disturbance and a fear of losing a job because of lack of knowledge of daily modifying technology and the end result person will develop stress and anxiety (Arnetz & Wiholm, 1997).

Relation between stress and information technology didn't give much attention in literature. This existing study, was therefore was intended to design in order to find out a relationship among IT expenditure and stress in Pakistani youth. The hypothesis of the study was that high IT utilization would be significantly related to stress in Pakistani youth.

II. METHOD

In this existing study, IT utilization was operationally defined as the total minutes spent per day for using internet and making phone calls or text messages.

a) Participants

From 4 different cities of Pakistan i.e. Islamabad, Peshawar, Jhelum and Rawalpindi data of 200 was gathered and the age range was 16-24. Convenient sampling technique was used.

b) Instruments

- Demographic Information Questionnaire

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Demographic questionnaire incorporated the information about the age and time period of IT utilization from the participants.

- Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)

DASS, the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales, was used to measure level of anxiety and stress among the participants. The subscales of anxiety and stress will be used only, excluding the subscale of depression. Each subscale has 14 items, exhibiting negative emotional signs and every item is rated on four point Likert scale. The score range from 0=did not apply to me at all, to 3=apply to me most of the time. It is

instructed that there is no wrong response. Level of anxiety ranges from mild to severe, based on the total score obtained. Similarly levels of stress also range from mild to severe which is based on the total score obtained on stress subscale.

c) Procedure

Various academic institutes were visited by the researcher situated in various cities of Pakistan that were chose conveniently for collecting the data. Issues of confidentiality and ethical standards were given proper consideration. Statistical Package (SPSS) was used for analyzing the data.

III. RESULTS

Table 1 : Cronbach's Alpha reliability of Stress Subscale (N=200)

Scale	No of Items	Reliability
Stress Subscale	14	.97

Table indicates that Stress Subscale has excellent reliability (i.e., .97) for the sample of the present study.

Table 2 : Pearson Product Correlation coefficient for use of Information Technology and Stress for the sample (N=200)

	Stress
Use of Information Technology	.557***

*** $p < .001$

Table 2 reveals a highly significant and positive relationship between IT consumption and stress.

IV. DISCUSSION

The current research's major concern was to discover the relationship among the IT usage and stress in Pakistani youth. It was hypothesized that higher practice of information technology would be significantly related to stress. Results are positively reliable with the hypothesis.

Because of brutal and precise experience of IT several psychological issues are dominantly associated with it (Aronsson, Dallner & Åborg, 1994; Nakazawa, et al. 2002; Korpinen & Pääkkönen, 2009). One of the key feature of information technology that is internet become a compulsory need of the youth and has been use for numerous factors. But beside the benefits it also brings higher rate of stress in its users. Although it provides the opportunity to its users to communicate and expand their time with each other; but it also create the risks of fear and stress in its users (Mishna et al., 2012). Mostly individuals assumed that IT facilitate them in order to overcome their work and relax them physically and mentally but in reality, information technology has maximized their mental fatigue and side by side also destabilized their social setup (Sharma 1999).

Dependency related to IT in which top of the list is internet is increasing day by day. When explored this dependency, it observes that people adopt this

dependency in order to reduce their mental and emotional fatigue. People might sense and experience emotional disturbance because of interventions in socializations. In order to overcome this tension person may directed and viewed modern technology as consistent supply of comfort and relax (Selye, 1975).

Stress is prominently a degenerative factor. As this excite the person and can arouse strong cravings to use again and again and get addicted with it. And efforts to discontinue the use provoke more stress (Howard, 1996).

This study will help the Youth in understanding the hazards of excessive use of information technology. They must adopt cautioned behavior and activities in order to avoid various mental and emotional problems related to excessive utilization of IT.

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Connection between the Two Poles of Personality-Narcissism and Happiness and its Colorful Reflection in the Lives of Two Distinct Statuses of Women

By Sraboni Chatterjee

Abstract- A sample of 150 aged women (50 divorcees and 50 spinsters) was selected to determine their psychosocial profiles. The variables selected for this study were narcissism and happiness. Data analysis revealed interesting findings that less orientation towards social acceptance make nevermarried women easy victims of impaired quality of life, higher authoritative attitude, exhibitionism, vanity and narcissism that leads to less commitment to relationships. Also, they have a tendency to exhibit lack of empathy, marked levels of hostility. Narcissistic trend, superiority, exploitativeness magnified image of self in divorced elderlies lives invite relationship struggle. The life sketch of divorcees indicates that the circumstances in which their personal inadequacies are evaluated and failure is experienced put an extra threat to their self-images and as a result of poor interpersonal relationships, they become easy victims of anxiety. Moreover, this study also depicts the fact that self-love for both subsamples is become a source for craving happiness but their ways of manifestations are different.

Keywords: psychosocial profile, narcissism, happiness, marital status, aged women.

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Abstract- A sample of 150 aged women (50 divorcees and 50 spinsters) was selected to determine their psychosocial profiles. The variables selected for this study were narcissism and happiness. Data analysis revealed interesting findings that less orientation towards social acceptance make never-married women easy victims of impaired quality of life, higher authoritative attitude, exhibitionism, vanity and narcissism that leads to less commitment to relationships. Also, they have a tendency to exhibit lack of empathy, marked levels of hostility. Narcissistic trend, superiority, exploitativeness magnified image of self in divorced elderlies lives invite relationship struggle. The life sketch of divorcees indicates that the circumstances in which their personal inadequacies are evaluated and failure is experienced put an extra threat to their self-images and as a result of poor interpersonal relationships, they become easy victims of anxiety. Moreover, this study also depicts the fact that self-love for both subsamples is become a source for craving happiness but their ways of manifestations are different.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The human, the topper at the evolutionary ladder owing to their rationality are designers of life. The fabric layout of life endorses their attempts to achieve something of their choice. The outcome is either in affirmative, resulting in satisfaction, satiation and happiness or else in negative, in tune of frustration or depression borne out of failure. The set goal of life, both in instinctive term and social emotional term is to be 'happy'. The folds of happiness being either materialistic or else realization-based inner achievements, the average mass of the society with their limited personal resources go for the former kind of happiness. Psychologically in the realm of well-being, this is also of no less importance.

Happiness may be closely related to yet another personality component, namely narcissism. Narcissism describes the character trait of self love, based on self-image or ego. Narcissism is an emotional Investment into the self. When normal, it leads to

sustained self-regard and mature aspirations. When pathological, it is accompanied by inordinate demands upon the self, excessive dependence upon others, and deteriorated capacity for interpersonal relations. Considering the earlier knowledge the present study is an attempt to probe this kind of happiness frames in older women, keeping mind their marital status.

Positive psychology works under the assumption that happiness is a scientifically unwieldy term and that its serious study involves dissolving whole into at least three distinct better defined roots to happiness (Seligman, 2002).

- Positive emotions and pleasure.
- Engagement and
- Meaning.

Argyle (2001) presented a tripartite conceptualization of happiness:

- The average level of satisfaction over a specific time period.
- The frequency and degree of positive affect.
- The relative absence of negative affect as depression and anxiety.

Again, Veenhoven (1994) stated, "happiness can be regarded as a trait if it meets three criteria (of

- Temporal stability.
- Cross situational consistency.
- Inner causation.

Happiness involves a general average level of contentment and well-being, with a high frequency of positive feelings such as good humor, joy, laughter. Hope and enthusiasm, coupled with relative freedom from negative feelings such as sadness, worry, anxiety, anger, irritability, dependency and despair.

Happiness can be described as a presence of more positive than negative events in our lives, and, more important, the ability, when negative feelings occur, to allow them only a minimal effect on our emotions (and on our bodies as well).

Considering the above discussions, Lucas and Diener (2000), pointed out that pleasant affect tends to

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decline with age, but life satisfaction and negative affect do not change with age. *Cummins (2000)* says Australian research shows a U-shape happiness curve only applies to people who do not have good relationships. Thus, findings suggest that, social support and quality of life are responsible for poor psychological adjustment and low levels of happiness.

Narcissism refers to a "pervasive pattern of grandiosity" that is characterized by arrogant behaviours, feelings of entitlement and superiority and a lack of sympathy for or concern about others (*APA, 1994*). *Hotchkiss (2005)* summarizes the history of narcissism theory and offers thumbnail sketches of what narcissism looks like from the perspective of several major theorists. From these conceptualizations are derived six key concepts that recur in narcissism theory, which are as follows:

- Differentiation
- Internal objects
- Primitive defenses;
- Envy;
- Superego development
- Affect regulation.

The word narcissism is derived from a great myth which is about Narcissus, a handsome Greek Youth, who rejected the desperate advance of the nymph echo. As punishment, he was deemed to fall in love with his own reflection in a pool of water. Unable to consummate his love, Narcissus pined away and changed into the flower that bears his name, the Narcissus (*Sanyal, 2005*). In other words, it relates to an exaggerated self love. However the term may consist of a variety of meaning depending on the orientation.

Elke, Hans-Werner, Martina (2011) examined the relationships on narcissism and perceived inequity in attractiveness in romantic relationships. In three studies of romantic relationships ($N = 253$, $N = 81$, and $N = 98$) the hypothesis was tested that high narcissists, relative to low narcissists, distort the assessment of equity in attractiveness. Narcissism was measured by the Narcissistic Personality Inventory. In Study 1 the hypothesis was confirmed. In Study 2 it was shown that although narcissism correlated significantly with self-esteem, it was the unique variance in narcissism which predicted the tendency to feel under benefited in respect to attractiveness. Finally in Study 3, dyadic data were analyzed on the basis of the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model. The data of 49 couples who lived together were included. The dyadic analysis indicated that actor narcissism exerted the expected influence on perceived inequity in attractiveness, whereas partner narcissism explained no additional variance. High narcissists felt more under benefited than low narcissists. The analysis of dyadic data in Study 3 indicates that the link between narcissism and equity in

attractiveness turns out to be an intrapersonal phenomenon because only actor narcissism, not partner narcissism, is significantly correlated with perceived inequity. In addition, partial intra class correlations revealed that if one partner tended to feel under benefited, the other partner tended to feel over benefited. The results are explained on the basis of the agentic model of narcissism. All three studies consistently revealed a gender effect indicating that women felt more under benefited than men in terms of attractiveness.

In this present context, the study of narcissism is felt to be important as its concept has been extended from the restricted domain of mental illness to encompass many tendencies among ostensibly normal individuals (*Wallace and Baumeister, 2002*). The construct has been found to be closely related with performance and self regard. Different types of work styles and consequent professional demands have been found to influence their narcissistic compositions among other personality traits

Ageing may be understood in the context of different elderly samples like those of divorced and never-married to have a better view of their differential ageing profiles, with effectiveness or ineffectiveness in certain respects.

Though the position of women in Indian society is of a complex nature which differs with respect to religious, social customs, economic level of community and heritage effects, even then it is not derivable that status of women in India has undergone some changes in recent years with increasing details of freedom and equality. The comprehensive change can be perceived all over the world but it may vary from society to society and culture to culture. Yet it is a fact that a large number of women continue to remain underprivileged and are still humiliated, harassed and tortured.

Virtually all societies consider married life the most desirable type of existence- and advocate relatively stable union between husband and wife. The marital union involves such activities as living together, having children and rearing them. But surprisingly it varies from society to society. In some societies it is almost unknown for a woman not to marry, and marry, moreover, at once soon after the onset of puberty. In others a good number of women remain single for life.

It is common knowledge and experience that never married women constitute a special human category which is different from such social categories as divorced, married and widowed women. Their life style, attitudes, behaviour patterns, purpose for savings and accumulation, patterns of spending, relation with relatives, plans and attitudes after and towards retirement, sexual needs, religious beliefs, and values are likely to be different from those who are belonging to married categories. The low level of happiness of the single woman is likely to be attributable either to lack of

gratifications associated with marriage, or to the difficulties of living in a marriage oriented world. It is the primary arena of identity and self-realization; providing "back stage" areas for personal control and intimacy (Laslett, 1978). To the extent that marriage is successful in fulfilling these needs, the never-married may be less happy, precisely because they lack this "significant validating relationships".

Divorced elderlies on another pole do form a significant portion of the elderly population. The process of divorce calls forth a number of constituent changes in the personality of individuals in the long run. This necessitates their inclusion in the present sample in the current investigation to disentangle and understand their psyche from mental health perspective. The breakup of any intimate relationship is painful, especially a marriage for which both partners once held such high hopes, and especially when children are involved. Individuals in an unhappy marriage are concerned with failure, ranging from their inability to select the right mate to their inability to make the marriage work.

The present investigation aims to study psychosocial profile of divorcee and spinster elderly women with respect to key variables of happiness and narcissism. The utility of the present study seems to be manifold in character for which fruitful use of the results of the present study is expected to prove worthwhile for the betterment of human beings individually as well as social welfare.

a) Considering these the present study purports to examine

To locate, the difference, if there is any, between divorcee and spinster aged women with regard to happiness and narcissism.

To probe, whether there is any relationship, between divorcee and spinster aged women with regard to happiness and narcissism.

II. METHOD

a) Sample

A total number of hundred aged women among which fifty belonging to each group namely divorcee and spinster aged women were selected. The subjects were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

i. Inclusion Criteria

Sex- Female

Age- 50 - 60 years

Educational level- Graduation

Working status-Working at government offices and private sectors

Marital Status-Divorcee/ Unmarried

All of them were from middle class socio-economic status, belonging to the Hinduism religion were Bengali.

ii. Exclusion Criteria

Marital Status-Remarried/Widowed

Working Status- Retired

Clinical Status- Presence of psychopathological symptoms

Candidate who not yet reached menopausal state was excluded.

iii. Tools Used

a. *Information Blank*- Consisting of informations like name, age, sex, religion, mother tongue, marital status, education, family history, working status, personal hobby, future economic plan, and major illness.

b. *General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) by Goldberg and Hiller (1979)* is used for eliciting psychiatric morbidity among the sub-samples. GHQ-28 containing 28 items is derived from factor analysis of GHQ-60 and consists of four subscales; each subscale assesses separate factors like somatic symptom, anxiety and insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression. It is as good as any other version of GHQ as a case detector. At the same time it gives scale sub-scores. Each item has four response alternatives. In GHQ, correlation coefficient of each item with total score is significant at 0.01 level. The split-half reliability is 0.97. Its sensitivity and specificity are 1 and 0.88 respectively.

c. *The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) by Hills and Argyle (2002)*- An improved instrument OHQ has been derived from the Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI). It consists of 29 items, each presented as a single statement which can be endorsed on a uniform six point Likert scale. Sequential orthogonal factor analyses of the OHQ identified a single higher order factor, which suggests that the construct of well-being it measures is uni-dimensional. OHQ is a self administering questionnaire and instructions are given in the beginning of the questionnaire. There is no time-limit to complete it. The OHQ has high scale reliabilities with values of $\alpha(168) = 0.91$ respectively. The inter-item correlation for the OHQ ranged from -0.04 to 0.65. Highly significant difference ($p < 0.01$) was obtained between high and low group of OHQ score for every item of OHQ (Hills and Argyle, 2002). This indicates that all items of OHQ are making a valid contribution to the measurement of overall happiness.

d. *Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) by Raskin and Hall (1979)*- It is a forty item measure that assesses narcissism as a normally distributed personality trait (Raskin and Hall 1979). The NPI distinguishes seven different aspects of narcissism, namely:

- Authority
- Self-Sufficiency
- Superiority
- Entitlement
- Exhibitionism
- Exploitativeness
- Vanity

The NPI is a self-administering test. There is no time-limit to complete it. The instructions to complete the questionnaire precede the items. Cronbach's α for internal consistency for NPI was 0.81. The NPI has been used widely and shows satisfactory convergent and discriminant validity (Bushman and Baumeister, 1998; Emmon, 1987; Morf and Rhodewalt, 1993; Rhodewalt et.al, 1998).

b) Procedure

The subjects were approached individually. First, the Information Schedule was handed over to each individual. After the information schedule was finished, ten minutes rest period was allowed to the respondents. After that with sufficient time-gap the rest of the questionnaires were randomly administered to all the respondents.

c) Precautions

- During the administration of each questionnaire, it was checked by the investigator whether the respondents were relaxed and willing to participate. If there was any tension on the part of any respondent, he/she was not forced to participate for that day, but a second appointment was fixed with her.
- The respondents were made to sit in a well-lit and airy room and made to feel comfortable. One respondent at a time was given the questionnaire.

- No time limit was given to the respondents while answering the questionnaires. However, it was found that most of the respondents covered the questionnaires within scheduled time.
- It was noted that each individual being tested should interpret the questions for themselves. The investigator answered questions about any particular item.
- It was assured to the respondents that the results of tests would be treated in strict confidence.
- Lastly, the respondents were asked to answer the question freely, frankly and honestly.

After the collection of data, scoring was done for each test and the scores were subjected to statistical analysis.

d) Sampling

Purposive sampling was followed for the present study.

e) Analysis

i. Scoring, Tabulations and Statistical analyses

Data for each of the questionnaires were scored following the scoring schedule for each of them accordingly. The scores were tabulated and statistical analyses were carried out that are presented in the section entitled "Results".

ii. Method of analysis

Data analyses were done by the methods described below:

Descriptive Statistics: Computation of mean and

Inferential Statistics: t- test and co-efficient of correlation were used.

III. RESULTS

Table 3.1 : Showing the mean and standard deviations of different study groups namely-divorcee and spinster with respect to the selected variables and their respective dimensions

Variables	Divorcee (n=50)		Spinster (n=50)	
	Mean	Standard deviations	Mean	Standard deviations
Happiness	62.96	3.04	30.64	1.89
Authority	2.88	.85	4.08	.57
Self-sufficiency	2.68	1.87	4.92	.80
Superiority	3.14	.88	2.18	.44
Exhibitionism	2.64	1.57	7.18	.69
Exploitativeness	2.28	1.03	2.02	.14
Vanity	2.78	.89	4.26	.63
Entitlement	.50	.54	1.04	.20
Narcissism	16.90	3.44	25.68	1.75

Table 3.1 represents the descriptive statistics with respect to the above mentioned variables and their

respective dimensions. It was revealed that divorced females have higher magnitudinal trend in happiness,

superiority, exploitativeness than spinster ones. On vanity, entitlement and overall narcissism than divorced another pole, spinster elderlies have greater mean counterparts.
magnitude in authority, self-sufficiency, exhibitionism,

Table 3.2 : Mean difference obtained from t- test showing the significance of the difference between females of different study groups corresponding to the selected variables and their respective dimensions

Variables	Groups	Combination of Groups	Mean Difference Obtained from t-Test (df=98)
Happiness	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	32.32**
Authority	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	1.20**
Self-Sufficiency	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	2.24**
Superiority	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	.96**
Exhibitionism	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	4.54**
Exploitativeness	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	.26
Vanity	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	.54**
Entitlement	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	1.48**
Narcissism	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	8.78**

* $p < 0.05$ level of significance

** $p < 0.01$ level of significance

Table 3.2 represents inferential statistics with respect to the above mentioned variables and their respective dimensions among different study groups. Significant mean differences were found in case of happiness, authority, self-sufficiency, superiority, exhibitionism, vanity, entitlement and overall narcissism.

Table 3.3 : represent the co-efficient of correlation between happiness and narcissism for divorced aged women

Variables	Mean	S.D	Values of Product moment Co-efficient of correlation (n=50, df=48)
Happiness	62.96	3.04	.359*
Narcissism	16.90	3.44	

* $p < 0.05$ level of significance

** $p < 0.01$ level of significance

Table 3.3 represents that a positive significant correlation exists between happiness and narcissism for divorced women. It also indicates that both the variables are increasing and decreasing in the same direction.

Table 3.4 : Represent the co-efficient of correlation between happiness and narcissism for spinster aged women

Variables	Mean	S.D	Values of Product moment Co-efficient of correlation (n=50, df=48)
Happiness	30.64	1.89	.112
Narcissism	25.68	1.75	

* $p < 0.05$ level of significance

** $p < 0.01$ level of significance

Table 3.4 represents that a positive correlation exists between happiness and narcissism for spinster women. It also indicates that both the variables are increasing and decreasing in the same direction.

IV. DISCUSSION

The total set of data was analyzed in terms of the descriptive statistics of mean and standard

deviations of all the selected groups of samples. The significant differences obtained from t- test in many instances of the selected variables of the study satisfied the theoretical assumptions that "Aging as developmental phase" is expected to have more of problems than earlier stages of life (Patel, 1997; Jamuna, 1988).

In the present study, significant differences were found to exist between the selected groups (i.e. divorcee and spinster) in terms of variables like happiness and narcissism. The findings are in line with other earlier supportive studies (Patel, 1998; Kanner et.al.1981); the possible reasons or probable

contradictory factors behind the obtained differences may be offered in the following fashion:

a) Happiness

Accidental transition in the life of *divorcees* (Mean=62.96 and S.D=3.04) (Table-3.1) increases excessive work family conflict (Aryee, Luk, Leung and Lo, 1999; Frone et.al., 1992; Noor, 2003). Separation from husband actually destroys their emotional make-up. Beside this, society views them from a negative angle that lowers happiness in them. But due to their divorced status, they can able to smell the fragrance of marital satisfaction to some extent than spinster subsample and hence have greater happiness than their counterparts.

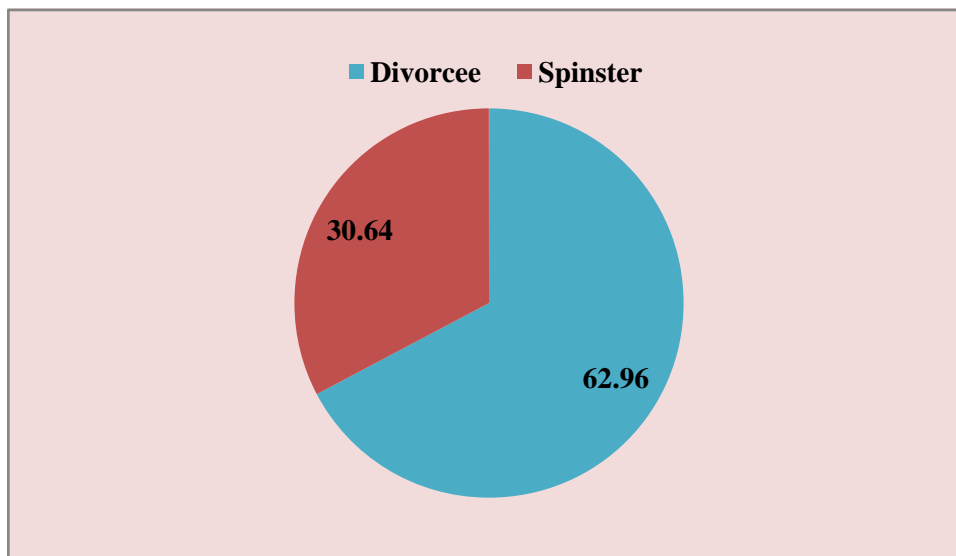


Figure 1 : Showing the position of two groups with respect to happiness

Beside them, due to negative self-image, frustration, anxiety *never-married women* are easy victim of excessive daily hassles (Diener and Emmons, 1984; Green, Salovey and Truax, 1999; Moskowitz and Cote, 1995) which ultimately leads to least happiness (Mean=30.64 and S.D=1.89) (Table-3.1) among them. Unmarried status is simply not being appreciated in our society; this regressive negative feeling basically creates excessive sense of being hassled and impairs the quality of life by decreasing motivation and impairs problem solving (Johnson et. al, 2000 and Rook, et, al.1990; Umberson, 1987, 1992).

b) Narcissism

Never-married women receives highest scores (Mean=25.68 and S.D=1.75) (Table-3.1) with respect to narcissism. Due to interpersonally inept they make good first impressions, yet are eventually regarded negatively as arrogant and self- centered (Paulhus, 1998; Robins and Beer, 2001). Due to less commitment to relationships, they have a tendency to exhibit lack of empathy, marked levels of hostility, especially in the face of failure feedback or social rejection (Twenge and Campbell, 2003; Bushman and

Baumeister, 1998). They tend to, lash out with aggression when they are rejected or insulted (Bushman and Baumeister, 1998; Twenge and Campbell, 2003). Literature also revealed that many of these behaviours can potentially be explained by the link between narcissism and impulsivity (Vazire and Funder, 2006; Kernberg 1975; Kohut 1966, 1977). They reported that this apparent grandiosity seems to be the covering or underlying feelings of insecurity or inferiority.

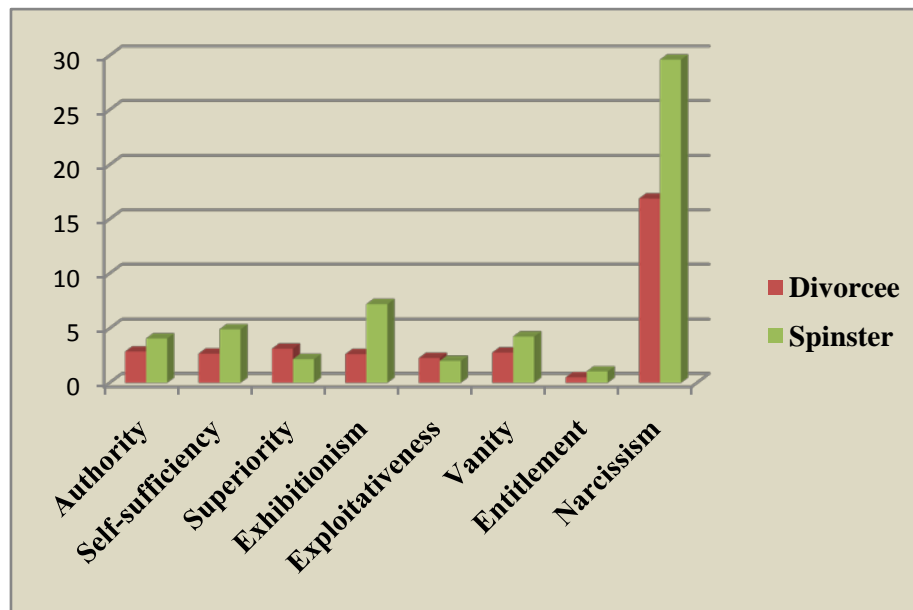


Fig. 2 : showing the position of two groups with respect to narcissism and its respective dimensions

Self-esteem of *divorced females* (Mean=16.90 and S.D=3.44) (Table-3.1) becomes fragile; as a result they feel easily hurt and threatened (Horney, 1939). Basically, they see themselves in an unrealistically positive way and want to accuse others being the cause of their failures or engage arrogant social behaviour (Paulhus, 1998) and react with hostility towards others (Bushman and Baumeister, 1998; Dimaggio, 2002; Rhodewalt and Morf, 1998).

c) *Quantitative analysis of coefficient of correlation between narcissism and happiness for divorced and spinster aged women*

Statistical analysis of co-efficient of correlation indicates that a positive significant correlation exists between happiness and narcissism for divorced elderlies (Table: 3.3). The statement depicts the fact that self-love is basically a source of getting happiness for them. Unrealistic perception of self actually pushes them to destroy their marital set-up because they feel that adjustment with the spouse is basically a way of smashing one's own satisfaction (Pimentel, Ansell, Pincus and Cain, 2006).

Similar tendency was also prevalent in case of spinster aged women also (Table: 3.4). But as the relation was not significant so it can be said that self love may be considered as a core feature for craving happiness for them. As they have nobody to share their feelings so they always finds satisfaction only through the fulfillment of their needs and may consider it as a core source of happiness in their lives (Vazire and Funder, 2006).

V. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In sum, the research project has unveiled the following informations:

Unmarried women have higher:

Authority
Self-sufficiency
Exhibitionism
Vanity
Entitlement
Narcissism

Unmarried women have lower:

Happiness
Superiority

Divorced women have higher:

Happiness
Superiority
Exploitativeness

Divorced women have lower:

Entitlement
Narcissism

a) *Implications of the Present Stud*

- The present findings are of immense value in understanding the mental profiles of two groups of aged females.
- The findings are also helpful for individual counseling in particular and family counseling in general if and when they are in requirement.

- The findings seem to provide general awareness regarding specific socio-emotional status of two groups of aged individuals that would prompt us to take certain resolution to help them in required social direction in life, so that nature of their stay will improve qualitatively in the long run.

In our country, probably no such systematic large scale study incorporating the mosaic pattern of the selected variables in respect of the psychology of ageing has been conducted before, so the research might be a contribution, reflected through this study and can definitely be claimed to be a new and original one in this arena.

b) Limitations of the Present Study

No research is free from its limitations. This study is also not an exception to this. The important limitations are as follows.

- In the context of present investigation, it would have been ideal to conduct a longitudinal study rather than a cross-sectional one to see the changes in certain psychosocial dimensions associated with marital status. However, limitation of funds and time hindered such plans.
- Another limitation of the study is that besides the urban population, the rural population, too, could be studied in order to obtain an overall perspective of marital status on ageing in different cultures as well as in societies.
- Besides, the variables of happiness, narcissism and certain other variables could also be considered for the present investigation. Variables such as depression, loneliness, adjustment, life-satisfaction, locus of control, value system associated with aged individuals and their marital status could be interesting grounds for the investigation.
- The sample included in this study involved working individuals; if a reasonable segment of house-wives could have been included then the specific findings would have borne more socio-emotional relevance in our culture-specific situation.
- A larger sample size would have been better to warrant generalizations of the present findings as the present study essentially supports the idiographic research.
- A number of questionnaires were used in this study. However, questionnaires may invite falsification and faking behaviour on the part of the subjects.

But unfortunately, the present study, being a time-bound one, did not permit the investigator to study the effect of marriage on aged individuals in such broader perspectives. It is therefore, left to future researchers working in this area who can make the use of these variables and make some additional new observations in the process of ageing.

c) Suggestions for the Further Research

After a thorough investigation on the problems and different aspects of the psychology of ageing in context of different marital status, the researcher is of the opinion that the present study seems to have opened newer avenues in the field that remain to be explored.

- Further research studies in this area may highlight on other aspects of the personality (e.g. locus of control, resilience, emotional intelligence, relationship profile, aggression, value profile) to attain a global psychosocial picture of elderly personnels differing in their marital status.
- Comparative studies may be undertaken between elderly personnel of different professional groups (e.g. doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers etc.) to determine differences borne out of the different professional choices in relation to the selected personality correlates.
- Longitudinal studies may be conducted using the same variables to yield an in depth picture.
- Elderlies belonging to different socio-economic status may be taken up for future investigation to yield further trend of results in this light.

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Does Microcredit Support get Women Empowerment?: Case of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Bangladesh

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Abstract- Women contain half of the total population of Bangladesh and as in the situation in most developing countries or lower middle income countries are reflected the less important sex, getting discriminatory action in the household and workstation. Though, the position and influence of women have enhanced radically as Grameen Bank unlocked its doors before thirty years. In spite of some critics, the vast mainstream of scholars comes to the decision that microcredit loans stimulated poor women and considerably improved their self-respect and confidence, and in this manner, they are empowered. Not only have Bangladeshi women achieved an upper position in the society because of microcredit, then besides the Bangladesh's financial condition has aided from the attachment of so many other people and businesses into the national economy.

Keywords: *economic empowerment, micro-credit, gender, women, Bangladesh.*

GJHSS-A Classification : *FOR Code: 370199p*



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



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Mohammed Abdul Halim ^α & Jannatul Ferdous ^σ

Abstract- Women contain half of the total population of Bangladesh and as in the situation in most developing countries or lower middle income countries are reflected the less important sex, getting discriminatory action in the household and workstation. Though, the position and influence of women have enhanced radically as Grameen Bank unlocked its doors before thirty years. In spite of some critics, the vast mainstream of scholars comes to the decision that microcredit loans stimulated poor women and considerably improved their self-respect and confidence, and in this manner, they are empowered. Not only have Bangladeshi women achieved an upper position in the society because of microcredit, then besides the Bangladesh's financial condition has aided from the attachment of so many other people and businesses into the national economy.

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I. INTRODUCTION

“Microcredit is about much more than access to money. It is about women gaining control over the means to make a living. It is about women lifting themselves out of poverty and vulnerability. It is about women achieving economic and political empowerment within their homes, their villages, their countries.”----- Noeleen Heyzer, Microcredit Summit Campaign 2000, Looking ahead.

Governmental and nongovernmental organizations in various low income states have acquainted with credit programs directed to the poor in contemporary ages. A lot of these programs specially aim women, centered on the assessment that they are more prospective than men to be credit constrained, have limited access to the income in labor market, and have a discriminatory part of power in family decision making (Pitt et al., 2006). In rural Bangladesh, life for women is deeply constrained by both the prevalence of male-controlled system and religious pronouncement. Their existence at the market is prohibited and they are also

not made-up to handle money, or apply property rights, overall of which strictly limits probable economic actions and acceptances leaving them subservient and reliant on men. Bangladesh is a least developing state where women consist more or less half of its entire population of which 80% are living in rural regions. Usually, in Bangladesh women have an inferior position as compared to men in all ranges of political and socio-economic life and they have seen with a very narrow access to income generating activities owing to a number of societal, traditional and religious impediments (Rahman et al., 2014). Employed women contribute to the national earnings of the nation and keep a supportable maintenance of the families and societies, all over the world. For instance, they face various socio-cultural barriers, lack of education, legal obstacles and personal complications. By tradition, women have been relegated. They are hardly economically self dependent and repeatedly they are the weakest members of the community. Approximately 70% of the world's underprivileged are women. However, they have not any access to credit and other monetary facilities. So, microcredit frequently object women. Microcredit is a perilous instrument to empower women from the poor house (Noreen, 2011).

Micro-Credit refers small loans for individuals who require money for self employment jobs that produce income or for crucial family necessities for instance education and health complications. It is intended to aid increase persons's quality of life by loaning them a small quantity of cash for a small period of time. The micro - credit system offers loans at actually low interest rate and efficient direction to low-income women to follow different income-generating activities intended at enlightening their financial and societal position. The program delivered women with loans to increase their prevailing economic doings or to inaugurate a new initiative. Such type investments, was supposed, would divert to societal and gender parity in the state, and would improve the exclusion of poverty, which would decrease insolvency among women (Maheswaranathan and Kenned, 2010).

The empowerment of women is an important prerequisite for the mitigation of poverty and the maintenance of human rights, especially at the particular level, such as it aids to form a base for societal

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conversion (DFID, 2000). The microcredit system is an exclusive invention of credit transfer system to increase income generating activities. The program covers small loans to underprivileged populaces for self-employment events thus permitting the customers to attain a healthier worth of life. It is the most extraordinary antipoverty instrument for the underprivileged, particularly for women. It has been fairly well accepted that micro credit sophisticated consumption, poor a hand up, microcredit can support discontinue the vicious cycle of poverty in as little as a single gen, decreases the helplessness of the poor section and directs to rise in their income level (Zoynul, & Fahmida, 2013).

There have more than 18,000 recorded NGOs of a various nature functioning on a broad series of progress concerns in Bangladesh. Contemporary ages have seen a growing consciousness of women's creative roles, movement, and their involvement to progress (Shamsuddoha & Nasir 2011). The improvement actions of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) in Bangladesh directs towards empowerment in its societal along with economic extents. NGOs have prepared their micro-credit programme available to women as they are more underprivileged and weaker than men are. It is nowadays apparent that the assistances increased from micro-credit are not only for women conjointly are handled through children and men too (Banu et al., 2011). Rural areas poor women have slight or no assets to offer as security which is compulsory in prescribed banking arrangement, micro credit has responded to the difficulty by proposing collateral free credit facilities. Since the role of generating self-employment prospects, generating confidence, growing consciousness within women in Bangladesh Grameen Bank (GB) has managed the system, initial time in the mid 1970s. Nowadays there are hundreds of micro-credit sources of diverse functioning extent through the state, generally in rural parts but also some in urban zones. The great ones comprise Grameen Bank (GB), Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Association for Social Advancement (ASA). Entirely of them gotten reputable position for Bangladesh in the global ground since of its poverty lessening policies by which poor rural women are moving on the track of empowerment and growth.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

It has frequently been assumed that if women had prospects for productive work external the home, this would render their assistances to the household more evident, and simultaneously lessens their economic reliance on their husbands (Kamal, et al., 1992). Empowerment is a comprehensive field to evaluate. Common trust defines empowerment of women as the capability to take self-decisions,

independence to contribute in the events of their choice and getting resources accessible both inside and outside their households. Whether writing about the accessibility of micro-credit empowers the rural Bangladesh women is by no means distinctive. Numerous articles have been written in the earlier, and there is no common agreement on whether micro credit empowers the rural women who takes the microcredit.

Various studies presented the major positive relationships between micro credit and women's socio-cultural, economic, political and personal empowerment.

Pitt et al. (2006) argues that throughout the last two eras, the micro - credit tactic has been progressively assimilated in the development speech. Particularly the credit is provided to the women and the common belief is that women are helped and empowered and are being recognized for devising a creative and vigorous role and so it is the entryway of attainment independence for themselves. Hashemi et al. (1996) had discovered the effect of micro credit on a number of signs of empowerment. They see that women's access to credit was a remarkable factor of the extent of economic assistances conveyed by women. Micro credit was connected with intensification in the asset possessions in their personal names; of an increase in their exercise of getting command. They found as well that micro credit was connected with women's political and legal consciousness. The loanees have conveyed expressively higher levels of movement and political involvement. Some associates conveyed higher participation in key decision making. The empowerment was also connected with their greater input to family income.

Rahman et al. (2011) have steered a study on effect of micro-credit programs on greater income borrowers in Bangladesh. The key concentration of the study was to assessment the effect of micro-credit on different family consequences, for example income and properties. The researchers have applied primary data collection technique through a prearranged questionnaire from borrowers of two key micro-credit organizations in Bangladesh for example the Grameen Bank and the BRAC. The outcomes presented that the micro-credit programs were active in producing a higher income level and possessions for borrowers on the whole. Though, the effect was not seen to be uniform thru income levels of borrowers. Greater income borrowers look to be more affluent likened to the middle and poorer income borrowers. It was also perceived that some other issues like age and education of the family head and companion in the family were noteworthy and made a good effect on the family.

Johnston and Morduch (2007) have directed a study to identify the influence of micro-credit on family income in Indonesia. They acquired domestic-level data from 1438 families in six provinces in Indonesia, a

significant position for microfinance. They perceived that loans for small trade were significant, but low income houses in the survey utilized loan for family needs around 30 percent of the period. Consequences exposed the significant non-business events in which they have consumed the loan were giving for medical treatment, school fees, household renovation or addition, daily intake requirements, societal and outing payments.

Habib and Jubb (2012) have emphasized on the social and political empowerment and social involvement of women. Their article provides research from 297 interviews and move toward to the decision that microfinance is a dominant apparatus for the women empowerment.

Suguna (2006) identified that economic empowerment is the preliminary phase of women improvement. The economic empowerment refers better access to economic assets both inside and outside the home. It is likewise connected with decreasing susceptibility of poor women in emergency condition such as scarcity, food crisis, unrests, passing and calamities in the household. Economic empowerment provides women the authority to maintain income and utilize it at their personal will. For women empowerment, the researcher has also focused on formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs).

Aminul Faraizi et al. (2014) have focused on the attainment of microcredit along with the assessments of it in the framework of women's empowerment. The book drives on to form that the sound-exposed achievement history of the microcredit program is carried out of quantity, and that the dynamics of cooperative concern for refund of loans by a set of women borrowers – generally perceived to be an instrument for the achievement of microcredit – is actually no less repressive than customary debt collectors.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are-

- To find out the role of micro credit as an approach for empowering women in Bangladesh.
- To discuss the capability of women as micro credit recipients to participate in decision making course at the family level.
- To study their economic empowerment considering capability to raise their income level.

IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research is not supposed free from limitations. Some limitations are find out below:

- (a) It would have been well if the data might be gathered from a larger sample than what has been taken into consideration.

- (b) It would have been well if data can be gathered from all the poverty alleviation events in rural regions in the study.
- (c) The mainstream of the loan respondents does not keep any record of their earnings, spending, data of bank loans, etc. Thus, they rest on their memoirs, which made the study inadequate.

V. MATERIALS AND METHODS

a) Methodology of the Study

The existing study is centered on primary data collected by the researchers throughout the months of March to April, 2014 from ten villages of Comilla and Chadpur Districts of Bangladesh. The people of the present study are the women members of famous Non-government Organizations (NGOs) including Grameen Bank (GB), Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), and Association for Social Advancement (ASA). The NGOs, credit program is essential for women and for this purpose all of the respondents nominated for the present study were women. The primary data have been collected by questioning the selected 100 stakeholders with the help of pre-structured interview guides. The secondary data have been collected from existing literature, textbooks, annual reports, program bulletins, government publication, etc. Thus, the data collected have been organized physically and explored with appropriate techniques.

b) Key Concepts of the Study

The micro - credit program plays an important role in socioeconomic development of rural poor, particularly for women. This study will help the certain organizations to be familiar with the influence of micro credit on women empowerment.

c) Women

Between women and men are both physically and communally dissimilarities determined. Biological, or gender, roles spot the essential variances between women and men. Communal, or sex, roles are extremely inconstant and agreed by settlement and other societal, financial, political and traditional factors (DFID, 2000). Women consists approximately half of the total populace and half of its prospection. Consequently, Socio-economic progress cannot be actually attained without the dynamic involvement of women at the decision making position in society. Women are missing traditionally, socially and economically in our tradition bound society of Bangladesh. To confirm the involvement of women in every spheres of life, all sorts of facilities and opportunities are to be provided to them (Jahan, 2007).

d) Empowerment

Empowerment refers persons obtaining the right to think and deed liberally, application of choice, and to realize their prospection as complete and

equivalent participants of the world (DFID, 2000). Empowerment is also linked to the course of inner transformation (Mayoux, 1998) and to the ability and power to take decisions (Kabeer, 2001). It involves transformation, choice and authority. It is a course of transformation by which persons or assemblies with slight or no authority to increase the capability to make decisions that impact their livelihood. Empowerment can be present at personal level, wherever it is about having an organization, greater independence, choice, confidence and self-respect.

According to Kabeer (1999), empowerment is around the capability to decide planned life selections, and founds three measurements. They are “resources” that defined largely to contain not only admittance but also forthcoming rights to material, social and community assets; “agency” that comprises procedures of decision-making and less-assessable appearances of agency for instance cooperation, dishonesty and manipulation); and “achievements” refers welfare consequences.

e) *Economic Empowerment*

Women's right to savings and credit offers them a better financial part in decision making through their choice about savings and credit. While women regulate decisions concerning credit and savings, they will enhance their individual and the family's well-being. The asset in women's financial doings will increase employment prospects for women and therefore have a 'trickle down and out' influence. The economic bear ability and feminist empowerment patterns stress women's individual revenue generating actions. In the poverty alleviation pattern, the stress is more on growing incomes at the family level and the practice of credits for consumption (Kumar et al. 2013).

f) *Women Empowerment*

According to UNIFEM (2000), women's empowerment comprises of “gaining the ability to generate choices and exercise bargaining power ... developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes, and the right to control one's life.” The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) comprises the below stated issues in its definition of women's empowerment:

- obtaining understanding and knowledge of gender relationships and the methods in which these relationships may be reformed;
- increasing a wisdom of self-esteem, a trust in individual's capacity to protect wanted modifications and the power to regulate individual's life;
- acquisition of the capacity to make choices and workout negotiating power;
- increasing the capacity to form and impact the course of social change to make a more fair societal

and financial direction, both nationwide and globally (DFID, 2000).

g) *Micro credit*

Micro-credit is a minor sum of loan provided to the poor to change their living standard. This small quantity of credit can support people to break the poverty cycle by producing revenue. Definition of micro-credit is a - “Financial service where small amounts of money (usually around \$50-\$150) are loaned to poor people for use as a capital to start or expand small businesses” (Shukran & Rahman, 2011). It is wonderful how the small amount of money provides power to the poor section to initiate a business and facilitating to breakdown the vicious cycle of poverty. This minor quantity of credit or economic funds to the poor people supports to inspire in creation of businesses. In other approach, it is an economic modernization arrangement which is grounded on faith and security-free and contradictory to conventional banking arrangement.

Thus, micro-credit is an addition of very tiny credit provided to the rural underprivileged villagers to support those selected identical human beings, therefore that they can run small-scale trade and can have the funds for food, shelter, education along with medical treatment to their family members.

h) *NGO*

NGOs are one set of actors who are dynamic in the determinations of universal progress and growing the well-being of underprivileged people in poor nations. NGOs work mutually autonomously and along with bilateral donor agencies from developed nations, private-sector organization's operatives, local governments and self-help organizations (Werker & Ahmed, 2008).

According to Sunkin et al.(1993) NGOs are “privately constituted Organizations – be they companies, professional, trade and voluntary organizations, or charities – that may or may not make a profit”. In other words, within this legal definition, all non-state organizations, whether they are businesses or third sector, can be seen as forms of NGO”. NGOs are commonly ideal as establishments devoted to “doing well” while setting aside revenue earning or politics (Zivetz, 1991). In the realm of international improvement, NGOs have been categorized as the fresh “favored child” of formal improvement agencies and declared as a “magic bullet” to aim and solution of the complications that have taken place the development method (Edwards & Hulme, 1996).

VI. HISTORY OF NGO AND MICRO-CREDIT IN BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, NGOs can be appreciated as groups involved in events that are private originally, charitable by policy but selling facilities, non-profit

distributing by claims but generate profit out of the delivered facilities cross-subsidizing. Development concerned NGO events are comparatively fresh in Bangladesh and initiate their events on a larger scale later the shattering cyclone 1970 and the liberation war taken place in 1971. Though the NGOs had been functioning in old style from the British colonial Age, they developed a drastic change only afterward the liberation war in 1971 and revolved into representatives of progress (Ahsan, 2005). A great number of international NGOs and charitable groups at the time stretched their assisting influences to support Bangladesh. Alongside, a small number of national groups developed at that age as impulsive reactions from several dedicated individuals, which are at the present time well identified prominent NGOs in Bangladesh.

a) A Short Description of Selected Three NGOs

Grameen Bank (G. B.) Grameen Bank started its journey in 1983. It is embedded in the action research attained out in Jobra village in 1976 which is adjacent to Chittagong University, Bangladesh by Nobel Laureate, Dr. Mohammad Yunus. The action research was inspecting the prospect of planning a credit delivery arrangement to deliver banking facilities directed at the rural poor people. The project's achievement was executed in other zones of the state with the maintenance of the principal bank of Bangladesh. Therefore, the project was converted into an autonomous bank by government rules in 1983 (Rahman et al., 2012).

Association for Social Advancement (ASA): Association for Social Advancement (ASA) is considered as the second principal Micro-Finance NGOs in Bangladesh. It inaugurated in 1978 with numerous forms of improvement programs for the social and economic advancement of the vulnerable rural people. However, from the time, 1998 ASA has been performing only micro-credit task by leaving all other societal programs. Moreover, ASA delivers group-based micro-credit and maximum of the ASA's credit is short-term in nature. Credits refund with a 12.5% service charge more is made through 45 same installments over one complete year. ASA delivers different sorts of credit in multi-sectorial events (Ahsan, 2005).

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC): BRAC initiate its journey in 1972, just after the Liberation War of Bangladesh by serving the immigrants

returning home from India to Shalla, a distant and isolated village located at the northeastern boarder of the state. The immigrants had to start their life again in their war-ravaged households and villages. BRAC assisted the inhabitants by serving them the resources required for house building and tools used in making a livelihood (Ahmed & Rafi, 1999). Corresponding other development establishments, BRAC was in progress to re-construct the state in close relationship with the government. Consequently, it converted a public development group so long as family planning, education, health and financial provision to diverse segments of the rural community with specific importance on the utmost underprivileged, for example women, fishermen and the landless people. Therefore, BRAC developed from an aid and restoration group to a development association (Rahman et al., 2012).

VII. MICROCREDIT AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The attention on women's empowerment in the perspective of microcredit gets to light the importance of gender affairs in policy improvement spheres more importantly than ever in the past. Women are praised as a 'weapon against poverty' (DFID, 2006). Empowerment through microcredit is recognized and measured in different proportions: influence on decision-making, on confidence of women, on domestic relations, on their position at family, and the prevalence of domestic violence, on their participation in the society, on their party-political empowerment and privileges (Cheston and Kuhn, 2002). The rationality of microcredit's probability for empowerment is comparable to the economic classic of empowerment: microcredit creates women financially self-determining by putting capital and monetary assets in their influences. Financial freedom effects in greater negotiating authority for women in their families and societies, and consequently results in greater esteem and self-confidence. Here the tasks of microcredit are synchronous with its prospective to empowerment (Kulkarni, 2010).

a) Micro- Credit And Women Empowerment In Bangladesh: Respondent's View

In order to conceptualize the impact of the micro-credit program for women empowerment Bangladesh, 100 stakeholders of the study area were interviewed to illustrate the real situation. Detailed analyses of the responses are the following.

Table 1 : Number of Respondents and NGO

Name of NGO	Number of Respondents
Grameen Bank(GB)	27
Association for Social Advancement (ASA)	27
Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)	46

The respondents were first asked about the timeframe of their involvement with the micro-credit operation of NGOs. They responded in the following ways:

Q. When have you involved with NGO's micro-credit operation?

Table 2 : Estimated average years of respondent's involvement in micro-credit program of NGOs period of receiving credit

Year	BRAC	GB	ASA	Total
0-2	16	08	06	30
3-5	14	08	11	33
6-8	07	04	04	15
9-11	06	04	04	14
12-above	03	03	02	08
Total	46	27	27	100
Average	4.8	5.44	5.33	5.11

The Table indicates that the average period of the involvement of the respondents with credit borrowings, among selected three NGOs is nearly 5.11 years. The figure for the BRAC borrowers is 4.8 years, for ASA borrowers is 5.33 years and Grameen Bank borrowers is 5.44 years.

Q. Do you think that the amount was sufficient?

Table 3 : Opinion of lonees regarding the amount of micro-credit

Name of the NGO's	No. of Respondents	Options	
		Yes	No
BRAC	46	9	37
GB	27	11	16
ASA	27	10	17
Total	100	30	70

The majority of the respondents (70 out of 100) hold the view that they are not fully satisfied with the amount of loan seen in Table 3. In reply to the question, most of member expressed that because of insufficient amount of loan, it is not possible for them to fulfill their requirement for which they have received credit form NGOs. Therefore, their dependency on NGO is

increasing. So the amount of loan should be enhanced. The above statement reflects that the NGOs are not providing as much credit to its borrowers as they need. As a result of which, the borrowers are not in a position to be self-reliant, which are becoming a barrier for their poverty reduction.

Q3. Do you think that the amount was sufficient?

Table 4 : Opinion of lonees regarding the Amount of Micro-credit

Name of the NGOs	No. of Respondents	Better Economic Condition	
		Before receiving credit from NGO	After receiving credit from NGO
BRAC	46	5	41
GB	27	2	25
ASA	27	3	24
Total	100	10	90
Percentage	100	10	90

The respondents were also asked to make a comparison about their economic condition (before and after receiving credit from NGOs). In reply to this question, they responded in the following way:

The majority of the respondents (90 out of 100) expressed that their economic condition has changed positively after receiving credit from

NGOs and the rest (10 out of 100) expressed negatively Table 4.

Q. Are you able to use the amount in Income Generating Activities (IGS)?

Table 5 : Opinion regarding the involvement in IGS

No. of NGO's	No. of Respondents	Option	
		Yes	No
BRAC	46	40	6
GB	27	25	2
ASA	27	27	0
Total	100	92	8
Percentage	100	92	8

The respondents were also asked whether they have any income generating activities? Two options were given to them. They replied in the following way: The majority of the respondents (92 out of

100) expressed that they have involved themselves in income generating activities after receiving loan from NGOs shown in Table 5.

Q. Is there any relationship between micro-credit and income generating activities?

Table 6 : Opinion regarding the relationship between micro-credit and income generating activities

No. of NGO's	No. of Respondents	Option	
		Yes	No
BRAC	40	35	5
GB	25	18	7
ASA	27	23	4
Total	92	76	16

Another question was asked to the respondents that whether do they have any relationship between the micro-credit and income generating activities? In the answer, they replied in the following way: From above discussion, it can be said that having a positive

relationship between micro-credit and income generating activities, the majority of the respondents (76 out of 92 which is shown in table: 6 have involved themselves in income generating activities after receiving credit from NGOs.

Q. Do you think that the investment of the loan helps to increase the status and prestige level?

Table 7 : Opinion regarding increase of the status and prestige

No. of NGO's	No. of Respondents	Option	
		Yes	No
BRAC	40	33	7
GB	25	20	5
ASA	27	21	6
Total	92	74	18

Answering to the above question regarding status and prestige the respondents positively informed that the micro-credit really increased their status and prestige. Analyzing the data in table-7 it can be said that there is a positive relationship between micro-credit and increasing status and prestige. 80 percent of the respondents (74 out of 92) were able to increase their status and prestige. The situation can be observed from chart-1 below:

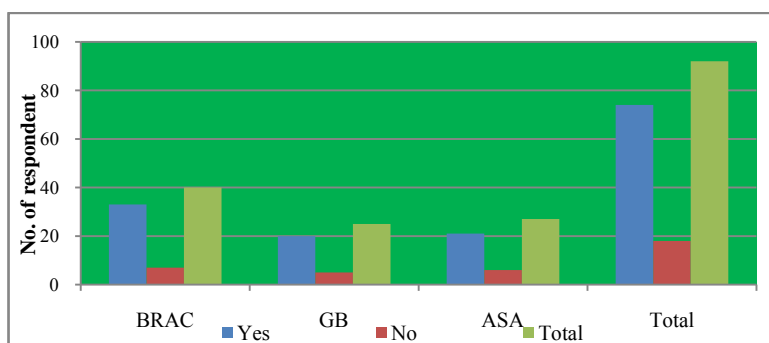


Chart 1 : Opinion regarding status and prestige

Q. Do you think that the contribution in income increases the decision making power of women in the family?

Table 8 : Opinion regarding decision making power

No. of NGO's	No. of Respondents	Option	
		Yes	No
BRAC	40	34	6
GB	25	19	6
ASA	27	23	4
Total	92	76	16

The respondents were also asked whether the contribution in income has increased the decision making power in their family. They replied in the following way: the majority of the respondents, i, e, more

than 82 percent (76 out of 92) expressed that the decision making power has been increased after receiving loan from NGOs shown in Table-8 and Chart-2.

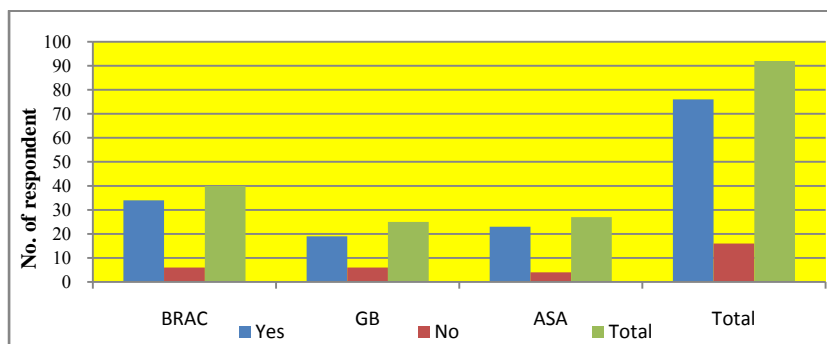


Chart 2 : Opinion regarding decision making power

Q. Do you think that the increase of income level increases the self-confidence?

Table 9 : Opening regarding self-confidence

No. of NGO's	No. of Respondents	Option	
		Yes	No
BRAC	40	31	9
GB	25	19	6
ASA	27	22	5
Total	92	72	20

The respondents were also asked about their self-confidence level after receiving micro-credit from the NGOs. Two options were given to them. They replied in the following way: The majority of the respondents (72

out of 92 or 78 percent) expressed that their self confidence level has been increased which is shown in Table-9 and Chart-3.

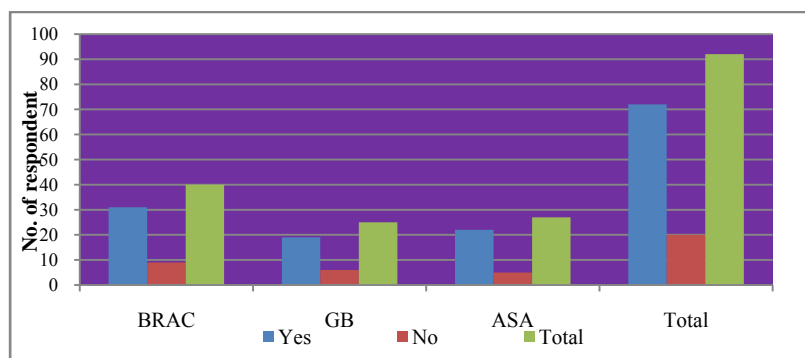


Chart 3 : Opinion regarding self-confidence

From the above analysis it may be observed that with the help of microcredit, not only have Bangladeshi women gained higher status, decision making power and increased their confidence level in the society, but also the Bangladeshi economy has benefited from the inclusion of so many additional people and businesses into the economy.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Empirical research and argument of the outcomes embrace the intention that women empowerment influenced by on the above mentioned variables. However, the microcredit receiver women had better control over assets than non-microcredit receiving women. Additionally, microcredit taking women enjoy a comparatively greater level of economic empowerment than those of non-microcredit receivers. Receiving Microcredit has been revealed to intensification of women's activity, through the growing negotiating power and decision making. It develops well-being, diminishes subservience, and has been presented to lead to a solidification of women's 'voice', break position and tasks adverse gender organizations, primarily owing to the proposed connection between involvement and the resulting intensification in political empowerment and communal deed. Micro-credit thus, is reasonably empowering and a very suitable instrument as part of a synthesis of growth approaches. Therefore, depending on the practical outcome, it can be determined that microcredit receiving has a progressive consequence on financial empowerment of women member.

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Alleviation of Poverty in Bangladesh: An Islamic Approach

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Abstract- Poverty alleviation has become an important issue for a developing country like Bangladesh. Considering the importance, the study aims to identify and suggest some approaches of poverty alleviation from Islamic perspective. In order to attain the objective of the study, the descriptive method of analysis was adopted. The main causes of poverty in Bangladesh are: corruption, injustice, poor ethics of work, lack of monitoring and follow up in implementing the poverty alleviation programs. It is found from the analysis that moral education, modification of land or agricultural rules, restructuring labor policy, facilitating access to credit for the poor. In addition, the study suggests that executing Zakah system properly, and reducing wastage and extravagancy in spending money are the two important approaches advocated by Islam to alleviate poverty from Bangladesh.

Keywords: poverty alleviation; Bangladesh; Islamic.

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Alleviation of Poverty in Bangladesh: An Islamic Approach

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Abstract- Poverty alleviation has become an important issue for a developing country like Bangladesh. Considering the importance, the study aims to identify and suggest some approaches of poverty alleviation from Islamic perspective. In order to attain the objective of the study, the descriptive method of analysis was adopted. The main causes of poverty in Bangladesh are: corruption, injustice, poor ethics of work, lack of monitoring and follow up in implementing the poverty alleviation programs. It is found from the analysis that moral education, modification of land or agricultural rules, restructuring labor policy, facilitating access to credit for the poor. In addition, the study suggests that executing Zakah system properly, and reducing wastage and extravagancy in spending money are the two important approaches advocated by Islam to alleviate poverty from Bangladesh.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh is a country of 160 million people with a population density of 1,188 per square kilometer (Ali, 2014; Khan & Ali, 2015). At independence, Bangladesh inherited largely a traditional economy with relatively low level of integration with the global economy. Since then, the economy of Bangladesh is not big and developed enough to support such a huge population and ultimately leading to producing a high rate of poor people. Moreover, the majority of labor force of Bangladesh is highly unskilled and uneducated, it's major export apart from agricultural products is textile and garment which accounts for 80 percent of their GDP and has attracted FDI since early 90s (Ali & Mujeri, 2011). Though in recent times Bangladesh is making good progress in the socio-economic field in increasing the literacy rate, improving expectation of life, increasing food production and decreasing infant mortality and total fertility. But due to lack of standardized, necessary infrastructure, such as roads and means of communication and hence, development can hardly take place in such a poor country. The rate of poverty reduction is very meager (Ahsan, Hamid, Khalily, Barua & Asif, 2013; Khan, & Ali, 2014; Khan, Ali, & Arefeen, 2014). Macro-economic growth could not help reducing poverty and income inequality. The country has to spend a significant amount of money to provide different facilities to these

poor people without getting any return from those expenditure. The government of Bangladesh has been trying to reduce the number of poor people with different measures and policy formulations since inception. Poverty is one of the most appalling problems that can badly affect a person or a nation. Unfortunately the level of poverty seems to be increasing in the developing countries like Bangladesh (Hoque, Khan, & Mohammad, 2015). The issue of poverty has become so important that it led to government of Bangladesh to take special programs and policy measures to eradicate extreme poverty by 2022. The issue of poverty has not only become a concern of Bangladesh but also the concern of whole globe. The UN declared 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty and 1997-2006 as the International Decade for Poverty Eradication. Most notable International organizations such as ECA, FAO, IFAD, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, and the World Bank have also moved toward addressing the issue of poverty (Barkat, Sengupta, Hussain, Rahman, & Ahamed, 2014).

II. THE CONCEPT OF POVERTY

World Bank (2014), defined poverty as "a state of deprivation or denial of the basic chances and opportunities needed to enjoy a decent standard of living, to live a long, healthy constructive life and to participate in employment and in the social, political and cultural life of the community." Ordinarily, poverty is based on a solotrait of well-being, "income". In this one-dimensional world, poverty is regarded as a condition or status related to the levels of income below an absolute threshold, the poverty line. High poverty levels are synonymous with poor quality for life, deprivation, malnutrition, literacy and low human resource development (UN, 2007).

According to UNDP (1999), typically poverty can be defined as a situation in which a household or a person is not able to satisfy certain needs or groups of needs (nutrition, shelter, education etc.) based on a priori yardstick. According to the UNDP (2009), "the poor are defined as individuals living in households with command over no more than \$1 per day per person valued at international prices."5 This is illustration of an absolute poverty line, while most countries define their own absolute poverty lines as well. Globally, the number of people meeting this definition of extreme poverty was

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980 million people in 2004 (UN, 2008). It requires no elaboration that the Muslim world has a large part of that pool of people in poverty.

Poverty means lacking basics – enough food to eat, adequate clothing, a dry home, an indoor toilet, hot water, and a bed to sleep in. Poverty is the obvious deprivation of well-being. It is not being able to satisfy one's basic needs because one possesses insufficient money to buy services or lacks the access to services. Though the income approach is widely referred to as an indirect approach to the measurement of poverty but it enjoys wide acceptance because of its simplicity and comparability. Even though different methods may yield different estimates (Baulch, 2012).

In addition, poverty can also be measured more directly through people's own assessment which is different from income approach (Hoque, Khan, & Mohammad, 2015). While such evaluations may suffer from a degree of subjectivity, experience has shown that careful research in this area can bring out a surprisingly robust understanding of the dimensions of poverty that matter most to the poor and the direction of trends on these dimensions (Rahman, Hulme, Maitrot, & Ragno, 2014).

According to BBS (2014), the country's poverty rate is now 25.6 percent, having fallen by .8 percent over the past year. The present rate of ultra-poor is 12.4 percent. These are the updates till June this year. BBS data also indicates that there is a gradual decrease in the rate of poverty reduction. In 2000, the rate of poverty was 48.9 percent. Over the next five years this will fall by 8.9 percent to 40 percent in 2005. And in 2010 the poverty rate was 31 percent. From 2005 to 2010, there was a decreasing trend in the poverty reduction rate. In the last four years (2010 to 2014), poverty fell by only 5.9 percent.

According to Houghton, Jonathan, & Khandker (2009), complete eradication of extreme poverty in a low-income country like Bangladesh would be one of disbelief; such a goal defies commonly accepted development paradigms and cross-country experience. But Bangladesh has already achieved many seemingly unachievable goals – in reducing child mortality or sending girls to schools or reducing population growth, or delivering microcredit to the poor. In order to eradicate poverty from Bangladesh, several governments since independence in 1971 have taken various programs to address the issue of poverty.

Poverty is caused by a variety of factors including insufficient access to employment opportunities; limited access to assets such as land and capital; ignoring rural areas to favor urban areas; inadequate access to market; Interest, restricted access to education, health, sanitation and water services; continuous demolition of natural resources endowments and abstaining of the poor in the design of development

programs that are thought to be beneficial to them (PPRC, 2012).

III. POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMS

According to World Bank (2013), the important poverty alleviation programs and projects have been taken so far are as:

- State Honorarium to the Disabled Freedom Fighters
- Training and Self-Employment Programme for Insolvent Freedom Fighters and Their Dependents
- Fund for Housing the Homeless (*Grihayan Tahabil*)
- Rehabilitation and Creation of Alternative Employment for People engaged in Begging
- Universal Pension Insurance Schemes
- Construction of Sweeper Colony at District and Metropolitan cities
- Poverty Eradication and Ensuring Livelihood for the People Living in Economically Backward Areas
- Poverty Eradication through Social Afforestation
- Improvement and Quality Seed Production of Rice, Wheat and Maize
- Promotion of Legal and Social Empowerment
- Ashrayan Project
- Greater Comilla Rural Infrastructure Development Project
- Programs/Initiatives of different Ministries/ Departments.
- Eradication of Hazardous Child Labor in Bangladesh:
- Micro-Credit Support for Voluntarily Retired/Retrenched Laborers/ Employees of Mills and Industries
- Credit Program to Assist the Agro-based Industries
- Activities of the Rural Development and Cooperatives Division in Poverty Reduction
- Economic Empowerment of the Poorest in Bangladesh (EEP) Project

a) *Policy measures taken by Bangladesh to eradicate extreme poverty by 2022*

According to Rahman, Hulme, Maitrot & Rango (2014), there are three actions in terms of policy measures which are as:

- Design and implement a national program of livelihood transformative initiatives to rapidly eradicate extreme poverty from Bangladesh.
- Systematically monitor and reform public services and social protection transfers to prioritize the needs of the extreme poor.
- Promote the institutional, policy and behavioral changes needed to address the root causes of extreme poverty.

According to (Shree, 2013), five process principles of the policy measures are as:

- Partnerships (for leadership, planning and action): National and local action partnerships should be established to oversee the implementation of the triple strategy, to receive monitoring reports and to implement corrective measures.
- Participation of the Poor: Participatory forums of the extreme poor should be established to inform project design and reform measures and to provide feedback on project implementation.
- Action: The nation should commit itself to the objective of the eradication of extreme poverty and establish a time-bound national agenda for action with this objective.
- Accountability (through close monitoring and Transparency): A national, independently managed, database of the extreme poor should be established and used for the purpose of targeting interventions and reporting progress.
- Inclusion (of all of the extreme poor): The national movement to eradicate extreme poverty in Bangladesh has an inclusive ambition. None of the poorest should be excluded by virtue of their marginalization, legal status, location, ethnicity, age, gender, physical capacity or other factors (Sobhan, 2010).

In spite of undertaking several poverty alleviation programs, projects and policy measures during about 45 years of time since independence, Bangladesh has not achieved remarkable progress in alleviating poverty. They made minor contribution to the decline in poverty. Till to date economic growth made major contribution in the alleviation of poverty. But economic growth is not sufficient for poverty alleviation. Still about one-fourth of total population is living in the condition of poverty. Out of 25 percent of poor, about 12 percent are ultra-poor (Kidd & Khondker, 2013). Analyzing the success of traditional ways of alleviating poverty, many financial scholars and experts are demanding to adapt Islamic approaches to alleviate poverty.

b) Causes for failure of poverty alleviation strategies

World Bank (2013), in a report of poverty assessment of Bangladesh identified following causes of failure of alleviate poverty strategies.

- Corruption: The funds are allocated for poor people to provide different social benefits are gone to private pockets and bank accounts. As a result, in spite of spending huge amounts of money poverty alleviation programs contribute significantly to alleviate poverty.
- Injustice: Offenses include falseness, fornication, stealing and armed burglary, intentional storing,

transacting in interest, refusal to pay zakah, wastefulness etc. Some of these wrongdoings cause draught while others bring other forms of misfortunes. Allah has deprived interest of all blessings and He had destroyed nations before because of their sins.

- Poor ethics of work: Most of the people do not give full concentration in their work rather they spend considerable part of their job for their farms or consultancy or lobbying for contracts.
- Lack of follow up and measuring the progress in implementing the programs and contributing to the alleviation of poverty. Absence of transparency and accountability is another reason for not to be successful (Sobhan, 2010).

c) Significance of poverty alleviation

Alleviation of poverty is important because; (i) the advancement of a nation should be evaluated first and foremost by how it treats the poorest people of society (World Bank, 2012); (ii) it is a worthy cause that echoes with the decent, sacred and practical sentiments of the people of Bangladeshis and can bring together the nation; (iii) the prospects of the nation is being wasted by leaving millions of people in a state of low productivity through lack of education, poor health and keeping out of economic opportunities; (iv) economic development will not eradicate extreme poverty alone; and (v) if poor people are provided with support and opportunity they will lift themselves out of poverty (Sen, Ahmed, Yunus, & Ali, 2014).

According to BBS and World Bank (2012), eradication of poverty may also give some other important benefits, which are; (i) national solidarity and pride in success, (ii) the elimination of severe hardship and suffering for 26 million fellow citizens, (iii) establishing the base from which to achieve a poverty-free nation, (iv) reducing the severe inequalities and divisions that feed political and social unrest, (v) enhanced economic benefits for all as productive potential is released, (vi) leading the world and showing others how to achieve similar success, (vii) regionally balanced development and mitigation of environmental risks.

There are a number of challenges in alleviating the poverty from Bangladesh. The most important challenges are; (i) Vulnerability to external shocks, (ii) Exclusion from public services, (iii) Insufficient economic opportunities, (iv) Health and nutrition vulnerability, (v) Gender inequity (Child marriage, dowry, divorce, bigamy, domestic violence, female headed household), (vi) Marginalized group specific risks and vulnerability (World Bank, 2013). According to BBS and World Bank (2012), another important aspect of poverty in Bangladesh is that extreme poverty is often chronic in that it is long lasting; people are not only affected for

their whole life but also passed down from one generation to the next. To eradicate poverty from a country like Bangladesh, persistent chronic poverty must be addressed.

d) Poverty in Islamic perspective

In the religion of Religion the poor people is regarded with a lot of kindness and esteem. Islam forbids degrading the poor and advocates the rich to help them as a way of attaining salvation in the Day of Judgment. Islam as a universal religion intended for the entire humanity, and its agenda or way out regarding poverty is not limited to Muslims, but it embraces the rest of the world (Rodrik, 1998). Indeed, it is necessary to assess the potential of Islamic methods to alleviate the challenge of poverty in the Muslim world rather than aim to embrace the bigger, global Islamic directive. Islam values prosperity and happiness. It teaches the believers to aspire for rewards in both the worlds, here and hereafter (Ather, Khan, & Hoque, 2011). Eat and drink of the sustenance provided by Allah, and do no evil or disobedience on the (face of the) earth. Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and defend us from the sufferings of the Fire (Sadeq, 1990). However, Islam does not support material comfort and wastefulness that prevail in the midst of widespread poverty, deprivation and inequality. Indeed, Islam does not want people to view or treat this earth as the Heaven (Elmissiri, 2003). Any level of affluence and prosperity that is widely shared with the desired distributive effects is alright, but Islam's message is decidedly focused on removal of poverty, deprivation and inequity. It also teaches the believers to seek refuge in God from the afflictions of poverty (Bonner, 2005).

A considerate Islamic society was established based on the Qur'anic exposure and the Prophetic leadership. The Islamic state established by the Prophet brought in reforms in the attitudes of people and institutional policies and frameworks to help poor people. During the period of Hadrat Umar's statute poverty was concentrated. The measure of this success with poverty was cited as capable zakat payers used to wander the streets to find qualified zakat recipients, but was not successful. There may have been some tumbles in this achievement, as the caliphate turned into realm (an anathema to Islam), but during the rule of Hadrat Umar ibn Abdul Aziz (682-720 AD), whole period also known as a extension of *Khilafat-e-Rashida*) poverty was alleviated again and the same kind of scenario – roaming zakat payers not finding entitled zakat recipients – was observed (Choudhury, 2005).

Islam takes the issue of poverty quite badly to the extent that it is acknowledged in the words of the Prophet seeking protection from poverty (*faqr*) contrasting it with another thing he sought refuge from: *kufir* (disbelief) (Sabra, 2000). It is well known from

Islamic history that during the earliest period of the mission of the Prophet, poverty was substantial during the early Makkan period (Farooq, 2002), and that it was mostly those from the poor, weak and disadvantaged sections of the Makkan society who responded to the call of Islam (Shirazi, 2006). The matter of the poor, weak and disadvantage, is consistently emphasized in the Qur'an. Not only did the Qur'an provide guidance for dealing with the poor; it also directed much of the thought and behavior concerned with economic activity. Indeed, poverty and economic activity were closely tied in early Islam. A kind of 'economy of poverty' prevailed in Islamic theory and practice (Bonner, 2005).

The Qur'an, the Prophetic commentary and legacy, as well as the period of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs show a notable sensitivity to the issues of the poor and disadvantaged. However, despite such sensitivities and awareness and the periodic development in reducing poverty, particularly as reflected throughout the time of Umar I and Umar II, poverty as a challenge needed systematic solution is not as well-known as theme or issue in general in following Islamic discourses. Of course, no other basis is as clear and staunch as the Qur'an on this issue. There is an inconsistency, however, between the Qur'an and those [other] explanations where as the deprived are the objects of urgent and repeated concern in the Qur'an and in the narratives. This difference in view about the poor is not simply a mishap. As Zaman (1981), argued regarding pre-Islamic Arabian idolatry, the concerns of the Qur'an often genuinely diverge from those of the enormous body of narrative and exegetical materials that surround it.

e) Objectives

The main objective of the study is to find out effective methods advocated by Islam for alleviating poverty. An effort was made to address the challenges and measures taken to alleviate the poverty by the government of Bangladesh to evaluate whether all the measures taken and the strategies adopted really ended the poverty.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study is mainly descriptive in nature. The study reviewed related literature and studies regarding poverty alleviation. Through reviewing the literature and relevant studies relating to poverty alleviation from conventional perspectives and Islamic perspectives, the study focused on defining poverty, causes of poverty, challenges of poverty, causes of failure of poverty alleviation methods and strategies in alleviating, finding out methods and strategies advocated by Islam. The study also tried to justify the importance and benefits of alleviating poverty, and why Islamic approaches are superior over conventional ones.

a) *Islamic approaches of poverty alleviation*

From the analysis of previous studies, following approaches from Islamic viewpoint can be suggested.

- The method of exhortation that requested people to aid their less fortunate brothers and sisters (Koran, 2004).
- The essential approach in which Islam necessitates a person to support his family, and close relatives to pay Zakah (Kuran, 2003).
- Finally, it is the responsibility of the state to provide support to the people who cannot afford minimum livelihood for themselves (Siddiqi, 2008).

According to Ibrahim (2006), there are some bases on which poverty alleviation programs from Islamic perspective are implemented.

- The resources are sufficient for fulfilling for fulfilling the needs and wants.
- The wastage and misuse of resources ought to be stopped.
- Heavenly injunctions should be applied to control the human behaviors towards resources.
- Merely permissible needs, and the requirements that build life on the earth, ought to be fulfilled.
- Illegitimate needs and desires that are responsible for destruction of lives on earth ought not to be fulfilled because they are always remained unending and unsatisfied.
- Islam suggests the following approaches.
 - i. Through Moral Education: A good number of Islamic researchers who suggested for Most of the Islamic scholar s who suggested for communal safety and societal integrity have focused on the importance of ethical education to convert the people into a person of afraid of God. The intellectuals also necessitated significance of sustaining policies and procedures such as rules and regulations for market and stringent observance of what is prohibited and what is not prohibited in Islam (Ahmed, 2002).
 - ii. Modification of Land/Agricultural Rules: The modifications relating to land or agriculture are to fortify the rights of land ownership, setting limit on holding size of land by a person, assisting people to get documentations of ownership for their land and other properties, financing the poor peasants in terms of agriculture, and providing training to increase knowledge and skills on agriculture (Farooq, 2008).
 - iii. Restructuring Labor Policy: Labor policy reformation is mainly related to moralizing dignity of labor, encouraging people towards industriousness, enhancing skills and abilities through training and providing opportunities for getting jobs. Another important aspect of labor policy is to establish a

unique wage structure throughout the country to eliminate discrimination of wages and salaries based on duties and responsibilities of workers considering the number of dependents, relative attractiveness of the location of the worker; and finally, the qualifications, knowledge, skills, experience and length of service of the workers. Labor policy may also consider allowing workers to own a percentage of shares of the organizations after serving a number of years (Dusuki, 2008).

- iv. Execution of Zakah: Zakah is a very important Islamic instrument of redistributing assets from rich to poor specified by Allah in the holy *Quran*. Specifically Zakah recieves a portion of surplus resources in access of a certain basic amount named *nisab* from every Muslim and is distributed to other people who are poor and needy. Distribution of Zakah to the needy and poor is likely to lift their living standards by giving their opportunity to invest if they become financially strong. The rich Muslim people are also likely to be motivated to give *Sadaqa* (Zaman, 1981).
- v. Facilitating Access to Credit for the Poor: Government may take initiatives to progress *QardHasana* loans or develop ways for the poor and needy to have access into partnerships like *mudarabah*, *musharakah* credit benefits based on Hire purchase of equipment, and leasing etc.(Mattson, 2003).
- vi. Privatization: the policy of privatization are to be put into practice so that such situations are not like to be created where few rich people may not monopolize the possession of private business enterprises keeping majority of the poor and needy out of the system (El-Gamal, 2007).
- vii. Reducing the wastages: According to a UNDP (1999) report, 1.3 billion tons of food produced in the world for human consumption every year gets lost or wasted. Many people across the world remain hungry, while at the same time many overeat. Specially, in third world countries like Bangladesh, a greater part of uneaten food is gone out before it is to be consumed. The report also mentioned that 15 to 35 percent of foods are lost in the field either before harvesting or during harvesting, and another 10 to 15 percent is disposed of at the processing, transportation and storage. In richer countries, production system is more proficient but wastage is higher. The betterment of water productivity and reduction of wastage of food may allow us to practice a better diet for the poor and needy and sufficient food for rising populations.

While addressing the pattern of food wastage it is also necessary at the same time to focus on the

causes of wastage of food. The main reasons of wastage are: (i) lack of religious knowledge about preventing wastage extravagancy in spending, (ii) growth in lavish spending, (iii) ignorance about the nature of life in this earth, (iv) affection towards apparition, and (v) following others' way of life blindly (FAO, 2011). Now it is necessary to look at what does Islam say about wastage and extravagancies in spending.

Allah says in the Holy Quran, "Oh children of Adam wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: but not waste by excess. For Allah loves not the wasters" (Al.A'raf:31).

Islam encourages the middle path in spending, neither miserly nor extravagant. Allah says, "those who when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between those (extremes)" (Al.Furqan:61).

Prophet (Pbuh) said, "Eat, drink and give in charity without extravagance and Phantasm". Allah says on the other hand, "Certainly the people who spend in waste and extravagance are brothers of Satan, indeed Satan was refuting his Lord". Prophet (Pbuh) says about overeating, "Those who eat full of stomach while their neighbors are in hunger are not from us".

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study aims to identify the approaches of poverty alleviation advocated by Islam. The study follows descriptive method for covering the objective. It is found from the analysis of the study that over population is not the real cause of poverty. The real cause of poverty is wastages and extravagancies in spending. If the wastage and extravagancies could be controlled then we would be able to see a world free from starvation death and poverty. It is the responsibility of all to alleviate the poverty not the government. If Islamic approaches like collecting Zakah, ensuring equal distribution of wealth to the needy and poor people, and controlling wastages of food items would be implemented holistically then it would be possible to alleviate poverty to a satisfactory level.

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- Keep on paying attention on the research topic of the paper
- Use paragraphs to split each significant point (excluding for the abstract)
- Align the primary line of each section
- Present your points in sound order
- Use present tense to report well accepted
- Use past tense to describe specific results
- Shun familiar wording, don't address the reviewer directly, and don't use slang, slang language, or superlatives
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Title Page:

Choose a revealing title. It should be short. It should not have non-standard acronyms or abbreviations. It should not exceed two printed lines. It should include the name(s) and address (es) of all authors.



Abstract:

The summary should be two hundred words or less. It should briefly and clearly explain the key findings reported in the manuscript-- must have precise statistics. It should not have abnormal acronyms or abbreviations. It should be logical in itself. Shun citing references at this point.

An abstract is a brief distinct paragraph summary of finished work or work in development. In a minute or less a reviewer can be taught the foundation behind the study, common approach to the problem, relevant results, and significant conclusions or new questions.

Write your summary when your paper is completed because how can you write the summary of anything which is not yet written? Wealth of terminology is very essential in abstract. Yet, use comprehensive sentences and do not let go readability for briefness. You can maintain it succinct by phrasing sentences so that they provide more than lone rationale. The author can at this moment go straight to shortening the outcome. Sum up the study, with the subsequent elements in any summary. Try to maintain the initial two items to no more than one ruling each.

- Reason of the study - theory, overall issue, purpose
- Fundamental goal
- To the point depiction of the research
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- Significant conclusions or questions that track from the research(es)

Approach:

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- Present a justification. Status your particular theory (es) or aim(s), and describe the logic that led you to choose them.
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Approach:

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- Do not take in frequently found.
- If use of a definite type of tools.
- Materials may be reported in a part section or else they may be recognized along with your measures.

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- If well known procedures were used, account the procedure by name, possibly with reference, and that's all.

Approach:

- It is embarrassed or not possible to use vigorous voice when documenting methods with no using first person, which would focus the reviewer's interest on the researcher rather than the job. As a result when script up the methods most authors use third person passive voice.
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What to keep away from

- Resources and methods are not a set of information.
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- Leave out information that is immaterial to a third party.

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The page length of this segment is set by the sum and types of data to be reported. Carry on to be to the point, by means of statistics and tables, if suitable, to present consequences most efficiently. You must obviously differentiate material that would usually be incorporated in a study editorial from any unprocessed data or additional appendix matter that would not be available. In fact, such matter should not be submitted at all except requested by the instructor.



Content

- Sum up your conclusion in text and demonstrate them, if suitable, with figures and tables.
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- Present a background, such as by describing the question that was addressed by creation an exacting study.
- Explain results of control experiments and comprise remarks that are not accessible in a prescribed figure or table, if appropriate.
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Approach

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- Make a decision if the tentative design sufficiently addressed the theory, and whether or not it was correctly restricted.
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- Recommendations for detailed papers will offer supplementary suggestions.

Approach:

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