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ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

Course: Changing Role of Urban Women (876) • Level: MSc

Semester: Autumn 2026

Assignment No. 1 (Units 1-5)

Total Marks: 100 • Pass Marks: 40

SOLVED ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

(For Study & Reference)

Note: This guide is prepared for study and reference purposes. Students are advised to read the relevant units of the course book, understand the concepts, and then write the assignment in their own words.

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Question 1: Gender Roles and the Role of Media in Gender Role Formation (20 Marks)

What are gender roles and how do media affect gender role formation?

Introduction

Every society teaches its members, from birth onwards, how a man and how a woman are expected to look, behave, feel and work. A newborn child is wrapped in pink or blue, given different toys, addressed in different tones and gradually steered towards different subjects, sports, occupations and ambitions. None of this follows automatically from biology. It is learned, practised and rewarded, and when it is challenged it is often punished by ridicule, disapproval or exclusion. The learned pattern is what sociologists call a gender role.

Understanding gender roles is the starting point of gender studies, because so many inequalities that appear natural — women doing unpaid housework, men controlling money and public decisions, women avoiding certain streets at night — are in fact produced by these expectations. This answer first distinguishes sex from gender and explains what gender roles are, and then examines in detail how the media — television, film, advertising, news and social media — form, reinforce and, increasingly, also challenge those roles.

Sex, Gender and Gender Roles

Sex refers to the biological differences between male and female bodies — chromosomes, hormones and reproductive anatomy. Gender, by contrast, refers to the social and cultural meanings attached to being male or female: the traits, activities and positions a society considers appropriate for each sex. Ann Oakley, who popularised this distinction in Sex, Gender and Society (1972), argued that while sex is relatively constant across cultures, gender varies enormously. What counts as masculine work in one society — weaving, cooking for payment, nursing — may be feminine work in another. This variation proves that gender is a social construction, not a biological destiny.

Gender roles are the sets of norms, expectations and prescribed behaviours attached to a person's gender. They cover at least four areas. First, personality traits: men are expected to be assertive, competitive, independent and emotionally restrained, women to be gentle, caring, cooperative and emotionally expressive. Second, domestic roles: women are assigned cooking, cleaning and care of children and the elderly, while men are assigned earning, repairs and dealings outside the home. Third, occupational roles: nursing, primary teaching and secretarial

work are coded feminine, engineering, management and politics masculine. Fourth, appearance and body norms: how each sex should dress, speak, sit and display or conceal the body. Roles are not merely descriptions; they are prescriptions backed by sanctions, which is why they are so powerful and so resistant to change.

Characteristics and Functions of Gender Roles

Gender roles have several important characteristics. They are learned through socialisation rather than inherited. They are relational: masculinity is defined against femininity, so changing one puts pressure on the other. They are hierarchical: the roles assigned to men usually carry more income, authority and prestige than those assigned to women, so role difference becomes inequality. They also vary by class, region, religion and generation — the expected role of an urban professional woman in Karachi or Lahore differs from that of a woman in a rural joint family, even within the same country. Finally, roles are internalised: people police themselves, feeling guilt or shame when they depart from what is expected, even when no one is watching.

From a functionalist viewpoint, traditional roles were defended as useful for family stability: a clear division of labour, it was argued, avoided conflict. Feminist scholars reply that this stability was bought at the cost of women's dependence and restricted opportunities, and that a division based on ability and choice rather than on sex would serve families better. Both viewpoints agree on one point: roles organise everyday life so deeply that people rarely notice them until they are broken — for example, when a man becomes a full-time carer or a woman becomes a long-distance truck driver and both attract comment simply for doing ordinary work.

How Gender Roles Are Learned: Socialisation

Gender socialisation begins before a child can speak. Studies of parents show that adults handle infants differently once they know the baby's sex, describing daughters as delicate and sons as strong even when the babies are the same size. Families then continue the lesson through toys, chores, dress, freedom of movement and the examples adults set: a daughter who daily sees her mother serve food and her father receive it learns a script about worth and service. Schools reinforce or modify the script through textbooks that show men in offices and women in kitchens, through teachers' expectations in mathematics and language, and through different rules of discipline and dress. Peer groups police appearance and behaviour fiercely in adolescence, and religious and cultural teaching is often quoted — sometimes selectively — to justify existing arrangements.

Into this process the media enter with a special power. Unlike family and school, media reach the child and the adult continuously, voluntarily and entertainingly. A message delivered through a loved drama character or an admired influencer does not feel like instruction, so it is absorbed with less resistance. Media do not simply reflect existing roles; they select, dramatise and repeat some versions of manhood and womanhood and ignore others, and repetition makes the selected version appear normal, desirable and inevitable. This is why media deserve separate and detailed attention in any account of gender role formation.

Media as an Agent of Gender Socialisation: Television, Film and Drama

Television drama is probably the most influential medium in Pakistani homes, watched collectively and discussed the next day. Its typical pattern has been remarkably consistent: the

ideal heroine is patient, self-sacrificing, family-centred and rewarded in the final episode for endurance, while the assertive or career-first woman is shown as selfish, westernised or unhappy until she returns to the family fold. The hero is a provider and decision-maker whose anger is excused as stress and whose control over female relatives is presented as protection. Repeated over hundreds of episodes, such plots teach viewers what a 'good woman' and a 'real man' are, and they supply ready judgements for real neighbours and relatives who resemble the negative characters.

Film works similarly, through glamour rather than domestic realism. Mainstream cinema has long paired an active hero who drives the plot with a heroine whose main functions are romance, song and being rescued, and it has normalised stalking as courtship and violence as proof of masculinity. Advertising compresses the same lesson into thirty seconds: women sell washing powder, cooking oil, beauty creams and baby food, usually inside a shining kitchen, while men sell cars, banks, technology and adventure, usually outside the home. A child who sees thousands of such advertisements before adulthood receives a powerful occupational and domestic map without ever being formally taught it. Cultivation theory in media studies makes exactly this point: heavy viewers gradually come to believe that the television world resembles the real world.

News, Social Media and New Patterns

News media shape roles by deciding who is an expert and who is a victim. Panels on politics, the economy and security remain heavily male, so authority itself begins to look masculine, while women appear disproportionately in stories about crime, fashion or family problems.

Sports coverage gives men's games headlines and women's achievements brief mentions. Such patterns do not forbid women from entering public life, but they make each woman who does so look like an exception who must justify herself, whereas a man is treated as the natural occupant of the role.

Social media have changed the process in two opposite directions. On the one hand, platforms reward conventional beauty, domestic perfection and displays of male wealth and toughness, and algorithms push stereotyped content because it attracts engagement; young users now perform gender for an audience, measuring themselves against filtered images and lifestyle influencers. On the other hand, the same platforms allow women to speak without editors, to run businesses from home, to learn skills, to find support groups and to see diverse role models — women pilots, engineers, athletes, scholars and single mothers managing with dignity. Movements against harassment spread because ordinary users could narrate experiences that television had ignored. Media are therefore not a single message but a contested field in which old roles are repeated and new roles are rehearsed at the same time.

Effects of Media on Gender Role Formation

- Formation of aspirations: children choose ambitions from the futures they can imagine, and media supply most of those pictures; wider representation measurably widens what girls and boys consider possible for themselves.
- Formation of self-image: repeated beauty and body standards produce dissatisfaction, dieting and low confidence, especially among adolescent girls, while toughness standards discourage boys from seeking help or expressing fear and grief.

- Formation of attitudes to others: viewers judge real women and men against media scripts, approving conformity and mocking or suspecting non-conformity at work, at home and in public space.
- Normalisation of behaviour: when harassment, control or domestic violence are shown as comedy, romance or deserved punishment, audiences learn to excuse them; when they are shown as wrong and costly, audiences learn the opposite lesson.
- Change over time: serials, advertisements and campaigns that show fathers caring for children, husbands sharing housework and women succeeding at work without losing family respect help audiences rehearse new roles before they adopt them in life.

These effects are strongest when media messages agree with family, school and peer messages, because the learner hears one lesson from every direction. They are weakest — and change becomes possible — when a person encounters contradictory, credible alternatives and has the education and support to evaluate them. Media literacy is therefore a practical reform: students who are taught to ask who produced a message, whose interests it serves and who is missing from it become less passive consumers of gender scripts.

Conclusion

To conclude, gender roles are the socially learned expectations that assign different traits, tasks, spaces and rewards to women and men, and they persist because every major institution repeats them. The media are among the most powerful of those institutions because they entertain while they teach, reaching people daily with vivid models of the admirable woman and the successful man. Television, film and advertising have historically narrowed those

models; news has made authority look male; social media both intensify old pressures and open new possibilities. The lesson for students of the changing role of urban women is hopeful but demanding: because roles are formed, they can be re-formed, and responsible media content, wider representation and critical viewing are among the most practical instruments for that change.

Question 2: The Dual Role of Mother and Worker (20 Marks)

Explain this statement: "Dual role of mother and worker is extremely hard".

Introduction

When a woman takes paid employment, she does not exchange one role for another; she adds a second full role to the first, which society continues to regard as entirely hers. She must satisfy an employer who expects the undivided commitment of a worker with no domestic responsibilities, and a family that expects the undivided devotion of a mother with no outside obligations. Each role is reasonable in itself. Together, performed within the same twenty-four hours and judged by standards that assume she does nothing else, they produce what sociologists call the double burden or second shift. The statement that the dual role of mother and worker is extremely hard is therefore not a complaint about women's capacity — women demonstrably perform both roles in millions of households — but a description of a structural arrangement in which two demanding jobs are imposed on one person while support, recognition and time are not adjusted. This answer explains the meaning of the dual role and examines why it is so hard: physically, emotionally, socially and economically.

Meaning of the Dual Role: The Double Burden and the Second Shift

The dual role means the simultaneous performance of productive work — paid employment or income-earning activity — and reproductive work — bearing and rearing children, caring for the sick and elderly, cooking, cleaning and managing the household. The second term is called reproductive not because it is unimportant but because it reproduces daily life and the next generation of workers, yet it is unpaid, uncounted in national income and treated as a natural expression of love rather than as work. Arlie Hochschild, in The Second Shift (1989), found that employed women in the couples she studied worked roughly a month of extra twenty-four-hour days each year compared with their husbands, because after the paid shift ended, a second, unpaid shift began at home.

In urban Pakistan the pattern is familiar. A teacher, nurse, bank officer, factory worker or home-based piece-rate worker leaves for work after preparing breakfast, packing tiffins and settling children, performs a full working day, and returns to cooking, homework supervision, laundry, guests and care work that continue until the family sleeps. Her employment is visible and her wages are counted; her second shift is invisible, so relatives can sincerely say that she 'only works a few hours' while she experiences almost no hour that is fully her own. The hardness of the dual role begins with this invisibility: a burden that is not recognised cannot be shared, reduced or compensated.

Time Poverty and Physical Exhaustion

The most immediate difficulty is time. Paid work has fixed hours, commuting in crowded urban transport adds one to three hours, and domestic work expands to fill whatever remains.

Something must give, and what gives is usually the woman's sleep, rest, health care, study and leisure. Research on time use in many countries consistently shows women doing substantially more unpaid care and domestic work than men, whether or not women are employed, and employed mothers reporting the shortest sleep and the least free time of any group. Time poverty is not a minor inconvenience; it is the mechanism by which the dual role damages health and limits careers, because the hours needed for rest, training, networking and promotion are precisely the hours the second shift consumes.

Physical exhaustion follows directly. Standing through a factory or hospital shift and then standing through cooking and cleaning; carrying water, shopping and children in settlements without services; working through pregnancy because leave is short or unpaid in informal work — the body receives demands without recovery. Home-based workers face an additional version: the home is the workplace, so there is no boundary at all, and piece-rate deadlines invade nights and children's time, with daughters drawn in to help. Chronic tiredness, anaemia, back pain and untreated illness are common consequences, and because a mother's illness threatens the whole household routine, she often postpones her own treatment longest.

Role Conflict, Emotional Labour and Guilt

Beyond physical effort lies role conflict: the two roles regularly demand opposite things at the same moment. A sick child and an examination duty, a parent-teacher meeting and a client deadline, a family funeral and a shift that cannot be swapped — each collision forces a choice in which she will be judged deficient by someone. Employers read absence as unreliability; relatives read presence at work as neglect. The sociological point is that the conflict is built into

the arrangement, but it is experienced personally as failure, which is why guilt is the characteristic emotion of the working mother: guilt at leaving children, guilt at missing work, guilt at resting.

Emotional labour adds a further, hidden demand. Mothers are expected not only to do care work but to manage everyone's feelings — soothing children, mediating between in-laws, maintaining kin relations, remembering birthdays, illnesses and obligations, and keeping the home's moral atmosphere. At work, especially in teaching, nursing, retail and services, women must also perform patience and warmth as part of the job. Performing emotion in both spheres, while suppressing her own anger and fatigue because a 'good mother' and a 'good employee' are both expected to be pleasant, is exhausting in a way that does not appear in any job description. Mental load — the continuous planning and remembering that keeps a household running — belongs here too: even when a husband 'helps' with a task, the noticing, planning and responsibility usually remain with the mother.

Workplace Rigidity, Weak Support and Social Disapproval

The dual role is made harder by workplaces designed for a worker with a wife at home. Rigid hours, late meetings, transfers without regard to family, absence of workplace childcare, inadequate maternity arrangements and penalties for part-time work all assume that care happens elsewhere and cost-free. In the informal sector, where most urban women actually work, protections are weaker still: no paid leave, no contract, dismissal for pregnancy and earnings too low to buy substitute care. A woman's wage is then spent substantially on transport, paid help and ready food — costs created by her employment — which critics cite as

proof that her working 'does not pay', without counting her contribution to fees, rent, medicine and savings.

Social disapproval compounds the strain. A working mother may face comments from relatives and neighbours implying that she works from greed, ambition or failure of her husband to provide, rather than from family need or her own right to a vocation. Children's ordinary problems — a low grade, an illness, a quarrel — are attributed to her absence, while the same problems in a non-employed household are treated as fate. This surveillance makes many women over-perform at home to prove that employment has not diminished them as mothers, intensifying the very burden in question. Class changes the form but not the existence of the difficulty: a professional woman can buy domestic help and childcare, though she remains manager of that help and bearer of the guilt; a poor woman cannot buy relief and relies on older daughters, neighbours and kin, so the burden is shared among females rather than between the sexes.

Effects on Health, Career, Children and Family Life

The consequences spread outward. For the woman: poorer physical and mental health, interrupted careers, refusal of promotions that require travel or late hours, loss of seniority after maternity breaks, and lower lifetime earnings and pensions — the so-called motherhood penalty, in which mothers earn less than comparable childless women while fathers often earn more than comparable childless men. For children, the effects are more balanced than popular anxiety suggests: children of employed mothers are not inherently disadvantaged, and they often gain in family income, in a role model of competence and in more egalitarian attitudes;

harm arises when care arrangements are poor and parents are exhausted, not from maternal employment itself. For family life, unresolved overload produces marital friction, especially where a husband enjoys the income but does not revise his domestic contribution — Hochschild called this the stalled revolution: women changed by entering employment, while workplaces and men changed much less.

Recognising these effects matters because it directs the remedy correctly. If the problem were women's weakness, the remedy would be to send women home, at great cost to family income and women's independence. If the problem is, as the evidence shows, an unfair distribution of total work and inflexible institutions, the remedies follow logically: sharing of housework and care by fathers as a normal duty, affordable quality childcare, parental rather than only maternal leave, flexible and predictable working hours, safe transport, enforcement of maternity and harassment law, and social respect for care work as real work. Where such supports exist, the dual role remains demanding — raising children and holding a job are each serious undertakings — but it ceases to be the punishing overload the statement describes.

Conclusion

To conclude, the dual role of mother and worker is extremely hard because it is, in reality, two full-time roles compressed into one person's day, under standards set as if each were her only duty, with the second role unpaid, invisible and socially enforced through guilt and disapproval. Time poverty, physical exhaustion, role conflict, emotional labour, rigid workplaces and weak childcare support combine to produce the burden, and its costs appear in women's health, earnings and careers. The statement should therefore be read as a criticism of arrangements,

not of working mothers. A society that needs women's earnings, skills and taxes, and that values children, must share and support the care on which both depend; until it does, the dual role will remain exactly as hard as the statement says.

Question 3: Public and Private Spaces in the City — Are They Gendered? (20 Marks)

Discuss public and private spaces in the cities. Are they gendered?

Introduction

Walk through any city with attention and a division appears. Some places are open, at least in principle, to everyone — streets, markets, parks, stations, offices, universities, courts and cafes. Other places are closed and personal — the home and its inner rooms, where entry is by kinship or invitation. Sociologists call the first public space and the second private space, and a long tradition treated the division as natural and neutral: the city outside for production, politics and exchange, the home inside for rest, family and reproduction. Feminist urban scholarship asks a sharper question: is this division the same for women and men? The evidence, from transport queues to park benches to the design of housing, is that urban space is deeply gendered — divided, designed, policed and experienced differently by sex — and that the boundary between public and private is itself one of the mechanisms by which gender inequality is maintained. This answer explains both spaces, then examines how and why they are gendered and how women negotiate and change them.

Public and Private Space: Concepts

Public space is space of general access where strangers meet under common rules: roads and public transport, bazaars and shopping centres, workplaces, educational institutions, hospitals, government offices, mosques' outer areas, sports grounds, parks and, increasingly, digital space. Its formal promise is equality — any citizen may enter, travel, trade, study and speak. Private space is space of restricted access centred on the household: rooms, courtyards and rooftops where family life, intimacy, care and rest take place and where the state's and strangers' gaze is, in principle, excluded. Between them lie semi-public and semi-private spaces — the mohalla lane, the apartment staircase, the workplace canteen, the university hostel common room — where community surveillance is strong.

The classical liberal tradition prized the division: public life governed by law and reason, private life protected as a refuge. Feminist writers such as Carole Pateman replied that the division was drawn by and for men. The public citizen was assumed to be a male head of household; women were assigned to the private sphere, and what happened there — unpaid labour, dependence, even violence — was placed beyond public concern as a 'family matter'. The slogan 'the personal is political' summarised the critique: the private is not outside power, it is one of power's main locations. This conceptual background explains why merely opening a public door does not by itself give a woman equal use of the city.

How Public Space Is Gendered

Public space is gendered first through unequal presence. In Pakistani cities, as in many others, streets, tea stalls, parks and public transport carry far more men than women at most hours,

and the imbalance grows after dark. Presence confers ownership: a space numerically dominated by one group sets its norms, and the minority moves through it as a guest who must justify herself. A woman waiting alone, sitting alone in a park or eating alone in a restaurant still attracts stares and questions that a man doing the same does not, which shows that the right being rationed is not entry alone but comfortable, unremarkable occupation of space.

Second, public space is gendered through safety and harassment. Street harassment — staring, comments, following, touching in crowded transport — functions as an informal tax on women's mobility. Its effect is cumulative: routes are lengthened to avoid certain stops, travel is restricted to certain hours, clothing and companions are calculated, jobs and classes are refused because the journey is unsafe. Urbanists call the resulting shrinkage of a woman's usable city her restricted 'activity space'. Third, space is gendered through design. Transport planned around the peak-hour male commute serves the chained, off-peak journeys — school, market, clinic, work — that carers, mostly women, actually make, very poorly. Poor lighting, deserted underpasses, distant bus stops, absence of clean public toilets for women and parks without sightlines all embody an assumption about whose movement matters. None of this requires a sign saying 'no women'; the gendering is built in, timed and priced.

How Private Space Is Gendered

It would be a mistake, however, to treat private space as women's kingdom in compensation. Inside the home, space is also allocated by gender and generation. The best rooms, the courtyard's public face and the seat from which guests are received and decisions announced are commonly controlled by senior men; women's domains are the kitchen and inner rooms —

spaces of work rather than of rest or authority. A woman may spend her whole day in the home yet possess no room, corner or hour that is exclusively hers, and her labour there is continuous and interruptible by everyone else's needs. The home is thus private for the family against the outside world, but not private for the woman within the family.

Moreover, the privacy of the home has historically shielded harm. Domestic violence, marital coercion, denial of food, medicine, education and inheritance were long treated as internal matters into which neighbours, police and courts should not intrude. Modern law in Pakistan — including provincial domestic violence and workplace harassment legislation — formally rejects that shield, but attitudes lag behind law, and victims still hear that a good woman preserves the home's honour by silence. At the same time, a balanced account must record what private space positively means for many women: kinship, faith, care, cultural continuity and, for women observing purdah by conviction, a dignified sphere of female society and authority. The feminist argument is not that home and family are worthless, but that their privacy must protect women as well as men's authority, and that assignment to the private sphere must be a choice, not a sentence.

The Boundary Between the Spheres and Women's Negotiation

The two spheres are connected, and the boundary is policed. Norms of purdah, izzat (honour) and appropriate female conduct operate as a portable boundary that a woman carries into public space: segregation in transport and queues, dress expectations, the need in some families for permission or accompaniment, and gossip that reports her movements back to the household. Mahram and mobility rules, chaperonage of students and the reputation risk

attached to hostels and night shifts all show the private sphere's rules governing public behaviour. Conversely, public life enters the private sphere constantly — through wages, schooling, media, phones and the law — which is why the boundary is a site of generational conflict in urban families.

Women are not passive within this geography; they negotiate it daily with intelligence. They travel in groups, build knowledge of safe routes and drivers, use women-only transport where available, create women-only parks, gyms, salons and study spaces, and convert semi-private spaces — a trusted rickshaw, a workplace room, a university library corner — into secure territory. Digital space has extended negotiation further: a woman physically at home can study, earn, organise and speak publicly online, collapsing the old equation of public participation with bodily presence in male-dominated streets, though online harassment shows that digital space is becoming gendered in its turn. Women's increasing presence in universities, hospitals, media, courts, police and legislatures also changes public space itself: each cohort's ordinary presence makes the next cohort's presence less remarkable, which is how gendered space is actually transformed.

Are They Gendered? Evidence and Assessment

On the evidence, the answer is yes, in at least five measurable ways: in who is present, in who feels and is safe, in whose journeys and needs design serves, in who controls space and decides its rules in both spheres, and in what consequences follow for earnings, education and political voice when access is restricted. A girl who cannot safely travel cannot attend the distant better school; a worker who cannot take a night shift cannot take the better-paid job; a candidate who

cannot move freely in public cannot campaign. Spatial inequality converts directly into economic and civic inequality, which is why town planning is a gender issue and not a merely technical one.

A fair assessment adds two cautions. First, gender interacts with class, age and disability: a wealthy woman with a car and driver experiences a different city from a domestic worker crossing it on foot, and elderly and disabled women face the steepest barriers of all. Second, men too are constrained by expectations — provision, risk-taking, absence from home and children — and safer, better-designed cities serve everyone. These cautions refine the conclusion rather than reversing it. Remedies follow the diagnosis: lighting, toilets, safe and affordable transport designed around care journeys, enforcement against harassment, women in planning and policing, mixed and active public places, and legal protection that follows the woman across the threshold of the home.

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Conclusion

To conclude, public space in the city is the realm of movement, work, services and citizenship, and private space is the realm of home, care and intimacy, but neither is gender-neutral. Public space is rationed for women by numbers, harassment, design and reputation, while private space assigns women its labour without guaranteeing them its protection or authority, and a policed boundary carries the rules of each sphere into the other. Women negotiate, adapt and steadily re-occupy both spaces, and every improvement in safety, transport and representation widens the city they can actually use. Urban space is therefore best understood not as a fixed

container but as a continuing social product — gendered by the society that built it, and capable of being rebuilt more justly by the same society.

Question 4: Traditional Views of the Family (20 Marks)

Discuss the traditional views of the family in detail.

Introduction

The family is the oldest and most universal social institution, and every society carries a settled picture of what a proper family is: who belongs to it, who heads it, how it is formed, what its members owe one another and what it is for. That picture is the traditional view of the family. In South Asian and Pakistani society the picture is especially strong, because family is not merely a private arrangement but the main source of identity, security, credit, care in old age and social standing; a person is introduced, trusted and judged through family. Yet the traditional view is now under pressure from urbanisation, education, women's employment, migration and media, so it must be understood accurately before its strengths and costs can be judged. This answer describes the traditional family in detail — its form, authority, marriage, gender division, functions and moral values — and then evaluates it critically, noting both what it protects and what it costs, particularly for women.

Form and Structure: Joint, Extended and Patriarchal

The traditional family is typically joint or extended rather than nuclear. Two or more generations — grandparents, married sons and their wives and children, unmarried daughters — live under one roof or in one compound, eat from a common kitchen, hold property jointly

and pool incomes under a common head. Kinship extends beyond the household to the biradari and clan, whose opinion governs marriages and disputes. Residence after marriage is patrilocal: the bride leaves her natal home and joins her husband's household, a transition marked ritually and emotionally, which places the new woman at the lowest point of her new home's hierarchy until age and sons raise her standing.

Authority within this structure is patriarchal and gerontocratic — vested in the eldest male, whose decisions on property, occupation, education and marriage are expected to be obeyed, and whose authority is supported by religiously coloured values of obedience and respect for elders. Authority is also gendered in sequence: the senior woman, typically the mother-in-law, exercises real power over junior women and domestic arrangements, so women participate in administering a system whose ultimate head and public representative is male. Individual preference is subordinate to collective interest; a choice that benefits one member but shames or divides the family is, in the traditional view, a bad choice whatever its private merits. This collectivism is the key to both the system's solidarity and its restrictiveness.

Marriage, Children and the Division of Labour

Marriage in the traditional view is a union of families rather than merely of two individuals. It is arranged, or at least approved, by elders; considerations of kinship, caste or biradari, religion, reputation and property weigh more heavily than personal inclination, and endogamy — marriage within the group, including cousin marriage — is valued because it keeps property, trust and women within known hands. Marriage is nearly universal and early by modern urban standards, celibacy is pitied or suspected, and divorce, though religiously permitted, carries

heavy stigma, especially for women. The married state confers adult status; the unmarried adult remains socially incomplete.

Children are valued as blessings, labour, lineage and old-age insurance, and traditionally a larger family and sons in particular were desired: sons continue the name, inherit and earn, and remain in the household, while daughters are described, in a revealing phrase, as another family's property to be raised and transferred. The sexual division of labour completes the picture. The man's duty is provision and protection — earning outside, dealing with officials, markets and strangers. The woman's duty is the interior: bearing and rearing children, cooking, cleaning, serving elders and preserving the family's honour through modesty and self-sacrifice. Each sex is taught that performing its half is not merely practical but moral, so that a woman who dislikes housework or a man who cannot earn is judged as failing in character, not merely in task.

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Functions Attributed to the Traditional Family

- Reproduction and socialisation: the family produces the next generation and teaches language, faith, manners, gender roles and occupational skills, making it society's first school.
- Economic cooperation and security: pooled incomes, joint property and reciprocal help insure members against unemployment, illness and old age in the absence of a comprehensive welfare state.
- Care across the life course: children, the sick, the disabled and the elderly are cared for within the home as a duty of love and religion rather than purchased as services.

- Regulation of sexuality and inheritance: marriage channels sexuality, fixes legitimacy and paternity, and transmits property and status in an orderly way between generations.
- Identity and belonging: the family gives the individual a name, a network, emotional anchorage and a recognised place in the community, protecting against loneliness and anomie.

Functionalist sociologists such as Talcott Parsons described the modern family's irreducible functions as the socialisation of children and the stabilisation of adult personalities, and the traditional family performs both on a large scale, adding economic functions that the smaller modern unit has surrendered to markets and the state. Defenders of the traditional view argue, with some justice, that where state pensions, insurance and care services are weak — as in much of Pakistan — the joint family's web of obligation is not an anachronism but a working welfare system, and that its festivals, rituals and daily togetherness supply meaning that individualised living struggles to replace.

Moral Values and Religious Colouring

The traditional family is held together less by contract than by a moral vocabulary: obedience (farmanbardari), respect (adab), honour (izzat), modesty (haya), sacrifice (qurbani), patience (sabr) and service (khidmat). These virtues are real and often beautifully practised, but in the traditional arrangement they are distributed unequally. The sacrifices expected of a daughter-in-law exceed those expected of a son; the honour of the whole family is made to rest disproportionately on the conduct and mobility of its women; and a woman's patience under injustice can be praised in terms that make ending the injustice seem like selfishness. Religious

teaching is invoked on all sides of these questions, and it is important for students to distinguish the religion itself — which in Islam assigns women rights to property, consent in marriage, maintenance and kind treatment — from customs, such as denying daughters their inheritance or forcing marriages, that persist despite religious prohibition. Much of what is defended as religious tradition is, on inspection, local custom wearing religious dress.

Criticism of the Traditional View

Feminist and critical scholarship raises four main objections. First, inequality: the traditional family systematically privileges men in authority, property, mobility, leisure and the value placed on their work, and trains women to accept the privilege as nature. Second, suppression of the individual: arranged decisions about marriage, education and occupation, and the surveillance of the joint household, leave little room for privacy, dissent or an unconventional life, and the cost falls heaviest on daughters, daughters-in-law, widows and anyone whose wishes diverge. Third, concealment of harm: because family honour requires a united face to the world, violence, coercion and deprivation inside the home are hidden and their victims pressured to endure. Fourth, economic inefficiency and strain: joint living can discourage initiative, pool the earnings of the diligent with the idle, overcrowd urban housing and generate the well-known conflicts between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law and between brothers' households that eventually divide most joint families anyway.

A balanced evaluation must also note the traditional family's resilience and adaptation. Urban families increasingly live in nuclear households while maintaining joint obligations — daily contact, shared expenses, grandparents providing childcare that enables mothers to work — a

modified extended family rather than a simple collapse of tradition. Education and earnings give younger women bargaining power within the old forms, and many families now consult daughters about marriage and support daughters' careers while still valuelying elders' blessing. Tradition in practice is thus not a single frozen model but a repertoire from which each generation negotiates, keeping solidarity and care while quietly discarding some controls.

Conclusion

To conclude, the traditional view presents the family as joint and extended in form, patriarchal in authority, collectivist in values, formed by family-arranged marriage, sustained by a strict sexual division of labour and justified by its functions of reproduction, socialisation, economic security and care. It has provided, and in Pakistan still provides, a powerful system of belonging and mutual insurance for which no complete public substitute exists. Its costs — gender inequality, restriction of individual choice, concealment of harm and burdens concentrated on junior women — are equally real and are the main reasons it is changing under urban conditions. The mature judgement for a student of gender studies is neither romantic defence nor wholesale rejection, but discrimination: to preserve the family's solidarity, care and respect for age while reforming its inequalities, so that membership protects every member, including its women.

Question 5: Short Notes — Gender and Civil Society; Women in Industry (10 + 10 Marks)

Write notes on the following: (1) Gender and civil society (2) Women in Industry

Introduction

This question requires two self-contained notes. The first examines civil society — the sphere of associations between family, market and state — and shows that it is not automatically democratic for women, who must organise within it to be heard. The second traces women's work in industry, from factories and workshops to home-based production, and explains why industrial employment has simultaneously exploited women and expanded their independence. Each note is complete in itself, with its own conclusion implied in its closing assessment.

Note 1: Gender and Civil Society

Civil society means the voluntary, organised life of citizens outside the state and the profit-seeking market: non-governmental organisations, trade unions, professional bodies, charities, religious and community associations, women's groups, student bodies, media and social movements. It is praised as the school of democracy, because in associations people learn to organise, deliberate, raise funds, speak publicly and hold power to account. Governments may change, but a strong civil society keeps issues — clean water, schooling, violence, wages — alive between elections and gives ordinary people a voice louder than a single vote.

Gender analysis asks who actually gets that voice. Formally, associations are open; in practice, leadership, funds, premises and public speaking in civil society have historically been dominated by men, for the same reasons as in politics and business: women have less free time because of unpaid care work, less independent money, restricted mobility and a social training that discourages public assertion. Trade unions long treated women's wages, maternity and harassment as side issues; professional bodies elected few women; community and religious

committees often included women as workers and fundraisers but not as decision-makers. Civil society, in short, reproduces the inequalities of the society from which it is civil, unless it deliberately corrects them.

Women have answered by building their own civil society. In Pakistan, organisations such as the Women's Action Forum, formed in 1981 to resist discriminatory legislation, Aurat Foundation and Shirkat Gah, together with countless local groups, shelters, legal-aid centres and health and literacy networks, created a specifically women's public sphere. Through research, documentation, legal aid, training and media work they changed what counts as a public issue: domestic violence, inheritance denial, workplace harassment and girls' schooling moved from private misfortune to policy questions, and major legislation — including the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 — owes much to this sustained associational pressure. Women's organisations also deliver services the state does not reach, from crisis shelters to microcredit groups and lady health networks.

Three current features deserve note. First, representation inside mixed organisations is improving under pressure and under donor and legal requirements, but token presence is not power; the test is whether women's priorities enter budgets and programmes. Second, digital civil society — campaigns, fundraising, support communities and movements conducted online — has lowered the cost of organising for women whose mobility is restricted, while exposing them to online abuse that itself needs collective defence. Third, civil society can also organise against women's rights: conservative associations are equally part of civil society, which is therefore a battleground of values rather than an automatically progressive force. The balanced conclusion is that civil society is indispensable to gender equality — no state reforms itself

without organised citizens — but its benefits reach women only when women organise autonomously, enter mixed bodies in real numbers and convert presence into decision-making power.

Note 2: Women in Industry

Women entered industry with industrialisation itself. In the textile mills of nineteenth-century Britain, in the garment, food-processing, tobacco and electronics factories of the twentieth-century developing world and in today's export industries of South and East Asia, employers sought women workers in large numbers. The reasons were candidly economic: women could be paid less than men, were assumed to be docile and unlikely to unionise, and were credited with 'nimble fingers' and patience suited to repetitive, detailed work. Feminist economists call this the feminisation of certain kinds of labour — jobs become female precisely as they become low-paid, insecure and low in status, a pattern visible in Pakistan's garment, stitching, sports-goods, surgical-instrument finishing and food-processing work.

The conditions of that work have been the debit side of industrial employment. Women cluster at the bottom of industrial hierarchies as helpers, finishers, packers and machine operators, with few supervisors and almost no owners among them; they receive lower wages than men for comparable work, are hired casually or through contractors to avoid legal obligations, and face dismissal for pregnancy, inadequate toilets and rest facilities, unsafe transport for shifts and harassment on the floor and in the commute. Much female industrial work is not even counted as factory work: home-based women stitch garments, embroider, assemble components and roll and pack products for industrial supply chains at piece rates, without

contracts, social security or the legal identity of 'worker' — a gap that provincial home-based workers' legislation has only recently begun to close. Occupational health bears a gender mark too, from eyesight damage in fine embroidery and stitching to respiratory harm in unventilated units.

The credit side is equally real and must not be erased by the catalogue of exploitation. An industrial wage, however small, is a woman's own; it raises her standing in household decisions, delays marriage, finances siblings' and children's schooling, builds savings and skills and gives her daily experience of a world beyond kin — colleagues, unions, transport, banks and towns. Studies of garment workers in Bangladesh and Pakistan repeatedly find employed women reporting greater say at home and greater ambitions for their daughters, alongside their complaints about pay and conditions; the two findings belong together. Industry also creates the collective settings in which women organise: unions, welfare societies, legal-aid clinics and campaigns for minimum wages, social security registration and harassment committees under the 2010 Act all reach women as industrial workers in a way that isolated domestic workers can rarely be reached.

The direction of reform follows from this double character. The goal is not to withdraw women from industry — that would restore dependence, not dignity — but to change the terms: enforcement of minimum wages and equal pay, written contracts and social security for factory and home-based workers alike, safe transport and facilities, maternity protection without dismissal, promotion ladders and technical training that move women beyond the 'nimble fingers' trap into supervisory and skilled grades, and freedom to unionise. Where these terms improve, industrial employment becomes what its defenders claim it is: one of the historic

routes by which urban women have gained income, public presence and bargaining power. In sum, women in industry are neither simply victims nor simply emancipated; they are workers whose exploitation and empowerment proceed together, and policy decides which of the two predominates.

Conclusion

To conclude both notes: civil society and industry are two great public arenas into which urban women have moved in the last half-century, and both show the same pattern. Entry alone does not equal equality, because each arena carries male-dominated structures within it; but organised presence changes the arena itself, producing laws, services, wages and precedents that purely private life could never have generated. That is why both topics stand at the centre of the changing role of urban women.

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