

Understanding Poverty as Social and Economic Enigma: Exploration through Qualitative Research Method

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Abstract

Poverty has posed enormous challenge to many nations and the governments of many developing countries have taken extra initiatives to develop strategic poverty reduction programs. However despite of all such measures this enigma is still intractable. There is a constant need to understand the nature, dynamics and causes of poverty in order to overcome and eradicate this menace. Therefore this study aims to examine the perception of poor people for being poor and also to examine the factors and reasons of poverty. This research draws on qualitative research method and observations since the individual interviews of 10 participants were conducted who had the earning of Rs.15000 per month. As a result this study captured the deprived people who felt being underprivileged and almost had no access to the basic needs e.g. food, house, clothing, education health facilities and many physiological needs. So much so that increasing level of societal injustice between rich and poor is constantly observed and this disparity results in the frustration and tension owing to which the poor people start taking drugs and involve in criminal activities. During the interview the respondents suggest that government should play a vital role in improving the quality of life of poor people.

Introduction

Poverty is a social phenomenon that is multifaceted in nature and entails deprivation of people. When the poverty prevails; people are underprivileged having no means to satisfy their basic needs. They are impoverished and lack essential facilities that are mandatory for their survival. Approachability to these basic needs and affordability for income sufficiency is entirely dependent on the economic well-being. As a matter of fact; the income and standard of living is directly related to each other and when there is an increase in income; this ultimately translates into better living, education, health and other facilities of life. Ever since the inception of society and start of civilization; the poverty has remained a major challenge throughout the world and Pakistan being no exception; this social menace has bitterly afflicted Pakistan for last many decades (Shirazi and Khan, 2009). Yusuf, Shirazi and Ghani (2016) stated that Allah has blessed Pakistan with human and natural resources and around 20 natural resources are possessed by Pakistan. Yet Pakistan is included in the list of poor nations of the world and developing countries where the pace of economic development is quite slow since



improvement in living standards come from economic development. When the primary needs of individuals are not fulfilled it clearly depicts the slow pace of economic development of underdeveloped countries as they fall prey to poor utilization and inadequate production of resources (Braheem, 2004). Bashir, Iqbal and Nasim (2015) stated that at present globalization is at its peak. And every state and government is striving hard to provide all the necessary stuff to improve their standard of living for the wellbeing of their public. The socio- economic and geo- political conditions of Pakistan are the main causes that have marred the overall entrepreneurial activities and led to low employment opportunities as well lower income. The poverty is very common subject of interest, composite program and strategies may helpful in reducing the poverty and improving the education system, housing, health and enhances international standards of well-being. Therefore, the government shows concern, takes efforts for poverty reduction and ultimately develops poverty programs and incorporated them in socio-economic model.

For economic development and poverty mitigation many countries with the support of their donors and development partners have designed poverty reduction strategies and programs (KIPPRA,2005).Further; there are number of poverty alleviation programs such as micro-credit, micro-finance and various awareness program that have been initiated by the government of Pakistan to enlighten the people regarding poverty reduction (Yusuf, Shirazi and Khan, 2016; Awan et al., 2011; Ghalib, Malki, Imai, 2011). Ghalib, Malki and Imai (2011) appraised that despite of spending huge money and efforts consumed in poverty alleviation programs the social and economic poverty is still prevalent and continues to be the main problem of Pakistan. Several studies (Yusuf, Shirazi and Ghani, 2016; Ali, Rashid and Khan, 2014; Ali, 2013; Asghar, Hussain and Rehman, 2012; Cheema and Sial 2012; Awan et al., 2011; Chani et al., 2011; Ghalib, Malki and Imai, 2011; Noreen et al., 2011; Chaudhary and Rahman, 2009; Shirazi and Khan, 2009) conducted in Pakistan have discussed the several dimensions of poverty and strategic programs from the economic and social perspective. These studies are valuable and insightful offering valuable information about the paradox of poverty such as its nature, components, and classification.

Yet; given the different classification and dimensions of poverty, these studies are unable to capture the clear dynamics of poverty (Haq, 2004). It was also observed that all the previous studies were conducted with quantitative research method and there seems to be a lack of qualitative research studies conducted in Pakistan. KIPPRA (2005) adopted quantitative and qualitative approaches to conduct research on poverty. KIPPRA (2005) observed that most of the researchers adopt quantitative research method, but there is a shortcoming in quantitative approach that it does not provide in-depth understanding of the phenomena, therefore researchers should use different methodologies to cover the different dimensions of poverty. According to Mutakha (2006) qualitative research method helps researcher to obtain deep understanding, live experience and subjective aspect of the individual behavior. Thus, the lack of evidence obtained from qualitative research methods underlines an urgent need to apply qualitative research as to understand

the nature and dimensions of poverty and perception of poor people for being poor. Therefore, the major objective of this study is to understand poverty in context of Pakistan and develop a holistic picture of the poverty from the perspective of the poor people. To achieve the planned objective, this study developed the following research questions.

- How does poor people perceive and describe their experience of poverty?
- Based on participant's live experience what constitutes poverty in Pakistani context?
- What are the factors that contribute to poverty?
- What is perceived impact of poverty on poor people?

Literature Review

Poverty: The literature offers manifold definitions on poverty. The poverty can be measured with multiple expressions, indicators and indices; poverty is caused by different reasons (World Bank, 2000). The term poverty is multipart and complicated human phenomena directly related with low living standards (World Bank, 2000). Teerakul et al. (2012) and Okoh (1996) mentioned that poverty can be examined through two aspects: economic and cultural. The economic aspect of poverty focuses on individual's income which requires to bear expenditures for healthy and happy life (Booth, 1989). The cultural aspect of poverty covers individual's internal and behavioral arrays (Yusuf, Shirazi and Ghanhi, 2016). Poverty means deprivation which includes food consumption, health issue, education of children, rights, security, dignity and respectful job (OECD, 2001, cited in KIPPRA, 2005). African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET, 2003) submitted that poverty has multiple dimensions: such low income, low expenditures, low education, unhealthy life, poor nutrition and health, low buying power in assets. KIPPRA (2005) assumed that economists measure the poverty with income, they believe income is directly associated with good living standards, people who earn high income considered that they enjoy quality of life. A poverty line has also been set to find the difference between poor and non-poor, cut-off point for income (one dollar a day) was set, an individual who comes below the established criteria is considered poor. Besides; poverty line is defined to be a *numerical* benchmark derived from the calculations obtained through statistical methods, it is *subjectively* chosen; for instance, the value judgments are used to infer that a standard of living based on *less than one* dollar a day is socially unacceptable. The same results can be extended to choose other poverty lines, such as *two* dollars a day, or a *median* income (KIPPRA, 2005). KIPPRA (2005) provided the meticulous definition poverty and classified it in three dimensions: absolute poverty, relative poverty and subjective poverty. The explanation of each dimension is as follows:

- **Absolute Poverty:** The absolute poverty denotes subsistence poverty; built on requirement of subsistence includes judgment of basic needs and measured with

resources (food, quality and quantity of food, housing or shelter, clothing) which are required to sustain physical and health efficiency and happy and healthy life. The absolute poverty is measured with certain indicators comprising of “level of living index” which covers basic needs such as nutrition, shelter, health. Some other higher order basic needs are education, security, recreation, and leisure which are beyond physical survival and encompass basic social and cultural needs.

- **Relative Poverty:** The relative dimension of poverty defines as the use of relative standards in time and place. It shows progression over the absolute standards. In particular, relative poverty is judged by member of specific societies who set the level of acceptable living standards and life styles. The relative poverty borrows the concept of elasticity that has rapidly changed. People are supposed to be relatively poor when they face problem in obtaining the resources such as running water, advance home appliances, new medical facilities, higher education intuitions holidays enjoyment, vehicles for personal use but for certain group of population these facilities are considered to be the luxuries of life.
- **Subjective Poverty:** To some extent subjective poverty is related to relative poverty. Subjective poverty is perceptual based in which individuals feel or do not feel themselves as poor. The subjective poverty entails that due to set standards of society the individuals are defined to be poor since they possess low self-esteem so they assume themselves as poor. An individual who have enjoyed respectable life before, but currently he/she is facing some financial problems so might feel himself/herself as subjectively poor. Though he or she may not be perceived or seen to be poor by other members of society because any society is seen as relatively poor by the standards but they may not see themselves as poor. On the whole; the societies may hold different standards for assessment of living standards.

In conclusion it is said that poverty is both social and economic phenomena that expresses deprivation of wellbeing of people and inadequacy of resources which are essential for the survival and to satisfy the basic needs of people having low standards of living.

Understanding Poverty in Context of Pakistan: According to World Bank (2007) poverty seems multidimensional within Pakistani culture comprising of adverse factors faced by poor people like: low income; non-availability of basic services such as clean drinking water, improper sanitation, lack of education and financial services, lower employment opportunities, no access to health services and etc. Yusuf, Shirazi and Ghani (2016) revealed that Pakistan is encountered with social and economic aspects of poverty which may include paucity of income, health care, education, food, social acceptance, self-esteem and self-actualization. According to the information obtained from (Hyder and Sadiq, 2010), the population of Pakistan was 164 million with its annual growth to be

19%. About 60% of population belongs to rural areas. Furthermore, 65% of the people of Pakistan are directly or indirectly involved in agricultural sector which produce 45% of their earnings (Government of Pakistan, 2007). Yusuf, Shirazi and Ghani (2016) mentioned that the ratio of poor people in Pakistan has reduced and factually witnessed that poverty has declined by the 29.2% at the country level owing to the strategic poverty alleviation programs initiated by government of Pakistan. The professionals indicated that in 1980's the position of poverty was changed and the researchers suggested that the dynamics of poverty varies from person to person, society to society, country to country, even situation to situation and time to time. Several studies such as Yusuf, Shirazi and Ghani (2016) examined the factors that determine poverty among beneficiaries of Pakistan, poverty alleviation funds. Impact of education on poverty reduction. Role of SME on poverty in Pakistan by (Ali, Rashid & Kahn, 2014; Ali, 2013), Awan et al. (2011) examined the impact of education on poverty reduction. Ghalib, Malki and Imai (2011) investigated the effect of microfinance and its role on poverty of rural households. The impact of PPAF micro credit on poverty alleviation (Shirazi and Khan, 2009), impact of gender equality in education on rural poverty in Pakistan by (Chaudhry and Rahman, 2009). Another study conducted by Asghar, Hussain and Rehman (2012) collected the evidences on impact of government spending on poverty reduction. Cheema and Sial (2012) examined the relationship of income, inequality and growth in Pakistan. Noreen et al. (2011) investigated the impact of microfinance on poverty. Chani et al. (2011) investigated the association between poverty, inflation, and economic growth conducted in Pakistan showing that government has taken thoughtful measures in last decades in order to reduce the poverty level. Since 1980's, the combined efforts were made in the shape of establishing Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund as well as launching of micro-finance and micro credit facilities did ultimately paid off to improve the living standard of people in the country. Also the government sponsored mega projects for better health facilities, education, income support program and economic partnerships have increased the employment opportunities and enhanced the income levels that have been pivotal in reducing poverty. Yusuf, Shirazi and Ghani (2016) highlighted that studies conducted in Pakistan shows that poverty is multifaceted, deep rooted and varies in nature as far as urban and rural areas are concerned. Further, these findings have confirmed that social indicators are very weak in Pakistan despite of the fact that economic indicators are healthy there.

Research Methodology

Research Philosophy

Poverty is a context specific phenomenon and the way people think about poverty varies from context to context hence our ontological stance is rather subjectivist because this allows for deep understanding depending upon the specifications of context. Furthermore, we have used interpretive epistemology in order to understand the meanings that people gave to social phenomenon of poverty (Merriam, 2002).

Research Approach

An inductive approach has been used because no predefined theory or hypotheses have directed the research process as it was entirely dependent on participant's responses (Goddard and Melville, 2004).

Research Design

Keeping in view the purpose of the study and the research questions a phenomenology has been used as a research strategy to study poverty in Pakistani context. This approach was most suitable in order to answer the research question because the phenomenon under investigation is a social phenomenon and our primary focus was on the lived experiences of people. In this study hermeneutical phenomenology has been used as the focus of study is the real life experiences of poor people. A phenomenological study delineates the lived experiences of people (Creswell, 2007). In literature the hermeneutical phenomenology focuses on the participant's lived experience (Van Manen, 2016).

Sampling Method: The choice of sampling technique depends largely on the nature of research question (Creswell, 2008). As our research questions require to investigate the personal experiences of poor so for this purpose we have employed non probability criterion sampling because we need the individuals who are actually experiencing poverty. As stated by Creswell (2007: 128) "It is essential that all participants have real experience of the phenomenon being studied. Criterion sampling works well when all the individuals being studied are representative of people who have experienced the phenomenon".

Target Population: In this study, researchers primarily contacted the people with an earning of below fifteen thousand rupees per month and the second category comprised of unemployed persons.

Time Horizon, Data Collection Method, Sources & Research Setting: A cross sectional study was conducted with 10 participants for understanding the poverty in Pakistan. Data was collected through six in-depth semi-structured face to face interviews. The duration of each interview was approximately 40 to 50 minutes long. Open ended questions were asked in order to deeply probe into the lives of participants and for this purpose more probing questions were used in addition to the interview schedule. All the interviews were written on the paper with due permission of the participants. Interviews were conducted in Hyderabad which is second largest city of Sindh Province of Pakistan. Observations taken during interview and field notes have also been used in order to get a deep understanding of the socio cultural and emotional context of the participants.

Ethical Considerations: Throughout research process the ethical considerations were taken into account. All the participants were informed in detail about the objectives of the study and their consent was taken to participate in the study. As all the participants were from the lower class experiencing poverty as they all were unfortunately uneducated so the oral consent was taken from them before proceeding further. The participants were allowed to clarify anything and ask any query during interview and they were also given the liberty to skip any disturbing question as the phenomena explored their bitter life experiences. Anonymity was also ensured and all the participants were given pseudonyms.

Data Analysis: For the purpose of analyzing data interpretive phenomenological analysis was done that involves “the detailed examination of the lived experience of individuals” (Lichtman, 2012: 260). After conducting first interview analysis was done concurrently with the collection of data. The concurrent analysis of data helped to make any adjustments for further interviews. All the written interviews were transcribed. Interviews were in Urdu and Sindhi as the participants couldn’t understand English. Later all the interviews were translated into English. Transcripts were read and re-read in order to gain better understanding and overall feeling. The researcher immersed herself in to transcription and tried to develop codes and developed themes for designed codes. Themes represented the ideas common to all the participants.

Findings

This phenomenological research was based on the day to day experiences of people living under subsistence level. To address the research questions a meticulous study was conducted. Hence the participant’s perspective combined with reflective thoughts of the researcher enabled to make a holistic understanding of the phenomenon of poverty. The following themes have emerged from the interpretive phenomenological analysis.

Theme 1: *Perception of Poverty*

At the onset; the first research question was about the perception of poverty according to the participants’ experience. Empirical material have shown that participants feel poverty as deprivation of basic needs like food, shelter, clothing, education, health services and other unfulfilled secondary needs and desires. According to them the poverty is a curse that doesn’t let them live a peaceful live. One of the participants portrayed a perfect picture of poverty according to his bitter life experiences as:

“Poverty is like spending a life in dark hole which has no way out towards light. Poverty is when you are unable to meet needs of your life. It’s not about having a big house, wearing expensive clothes, buying toys for your kids. Neither it is about inability to spend too much money on events nor is it about eating fish, mutton or chicken. It is about very basic needs about food, home and clothes. (P-4)”

According to the participants; they find themselves trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty that does not let them think of anything else. Even they are not certain about getting the requisites of burial. According to P-5.

We are the people who spend all the life worrying about “*marte waqt kafan bhi milega ya nahi?*” [Translation: Would we get any shroud at the time of death?]. Poverty is when you spend all the life working hard yet can't survive without borrowing or getting alms and one can't look beyond affording the basic necessities of life without any thought of saving money for better future of our Children. (P-10)”

In current scenario; the poor due to their hardships are denied the facilities and seem helpless to secure the better educational and health needs of their children since their dream of improving the standard of living is never fulfilled.

As one of the participants divulged, “Poverty is a curse; we know and understand that we are poor so we don't dare to dream because we know that we are short of resources to make our dreams come true. (P-2)”

From the above narrative it can easily be inferred that in Pakistani context; poverty means being a destitute with living a miserable life with no access to the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing. For poor class all the rest of wishes come under the category luxuries which are unaffordable.

Theme2: *Unsatisfied Physiological Needs*

From the analysis of narratives given by the participants; it has been observed that poverty keeps physiological needs unfulfilled. The extent of these unfulfilled needs may be different for some people and could vary from person to person. Some people get enough food but have no place to live and no clothes to wear since one participant shared her bitter experience as follows:

“I have starved even four days without food in the house. My husband used to offer me just water to drink for 2 or 3 days. I even begged for a piece of bread from the neighbors. In this hardship my parents came to our rescue and gave us some flour to make our own dough bread otherwise we had nothing to eat for longer time period. (P-1)”

Hospitalization and medicines are way too expensive for a poor person who cannot afford basic health facilities as they just leave their health at stake. Whenever some poor gets ill so it becomes extremely difficult to manage and there is always a tradeoff between food and medicine.

According to (P-3) “my children are ill and I don't have money for their medicine. What should I do; either I can feed them or buy medicine as I can't do the both. I am sad and used to weep at night while gazing at my suffering children but I'm helpless as she kept on saying ‘*roti khilaon ya dawai?*’ [Translation: Should I feed my kids with bread or offer them medicine?]. (P-8)”

The above narrative of participant clearly speaks volume about the fact that poverty is social menace and especially when the resources are scarce; it is almost impossible to make both the ends meet and poor undergo extreme agony when they see their children suffer. To add insult to injury; the lower wages and large family size aggravate this dilemma in the face of rising inflation with limited purchasing power.

“After paying off the bills and money to the creditors; I am just left with two thousand rupees to survive the whole month and with this petty sum I can buy some cooking oil, handful of vegetables and some flour that is insufficient for the whole month for all of us hence our second half of month is again spent in borrowing to purchase the necessary groceries. And mostly we live and survive on the leftover food offered by my owner that I used to bring to my house to share and eat with my family. I don’t have enough “*charpayi (bed)*” to sleep at night except the two old beds that were given by my mistresses. Our children sleep without blankets and mattresses. Also in the summers; it becomes unbearable for my children to drink normal water in scorching heat but there is no other option as I do not have any extra penny to buy the ice block from market to make a drinking water bit chiller and easy to drink. (P-4)”

Another participant expressed her difficulty in buying clothes; “Everything is so expensive for us “*Khud ko bhooka rakh rakh ke bachon ko kapre le k deti hoon*” [Translation: I have to starve in order to buy clothes for my children]. (P-6)”

Theme 3: *Societal Injustice and Brutality*

Life of a poor becomes even more adverse when they face hostile attitudes from the society leading them to be full of frustration and inferiority complexes and this kind of differential treatment with the deprived class spurs hatred in society in general. As a matter of fact; these inequality patterns are disastrous and lead to societal frustration and spark the crime rate to go high. As one of the participants while giving vent to his dejected feelings said,

“Sometimes we receive hurtful remarks from others such as “we being poor should sit on the floor while eating and maintain certain distance from others. Also using the common stuff such as sitting on sofa irk others and get reprimanded as if we are untouchable class of the society who are not worthy of anything good. Every time we are disgraced and asked by all not to cross our limits as these real happenings are so hurtful indeed. Yet we are content and take our state of deprivation as will of God who has created all the mankind equal and without any discretion. (P-1)”

In fact the suffering of poor multiplies due to indifferent attitude of society. Hence the poor class does experience lack of care and this feeling is so excruciating that in some extreme cases one is ready to commit suicide and

such grave cases have been reported in real life. One participant shared an event, “On our religious Eve Day of Eid ul Adha when everybody else enjoys eating the meat we cook potatoes and eat with family since nobody is ready to share the meat even on that day (P-7)”.

Sometimes the societal pressures pose undue burden on the deprived class and in order to keep up with these so called societal norms they borrow money and make their situation even worse.

Another participant shared her views in this melancholic way, “Six years ago I somehow managed to get my daughter married [nikah ceremony was held] but we are still unable to do “ruksakti” i.e. [Send her off to husband’s house] due to no savings and shortage of money. Also owing to strong and deep rooted tradition of dowry in our culture we are under immense pressure to arrange the dowry for our daughter before she is taken by her husband to his home as the participant kept saying, “*braderay kya kahe gi*” [Translation: How our family and acquaintances will react to our inability of offer dowry?]. As I don’t want my daughter to hear taunts like “*make ghar se khali hath aae he*” [Translation: She has come empty handed (without dowry) from her mother’s house]. (P-4)”

The society has always been intolerant towards the poor and dealt it with disdain without showing any respect to them. They are not provided enough space to be part of very fabric of society and face problem in claiming their due rights. There are real life examples when the poor are made to feel as untouchables who only deserve rejection and being helpless everywhere and by everyone.

Theme 4: *Poor Governance*

Government with all its authority and power can play a vital role in eliminating poverty and addressing other issues emanating from the poverty. However in the face of under-developed system and infrastructure it becomes an uphill task and poverty takes shape of plague that aggravates by no bounds. Similarly according to participants; the government has failed to provide any relief to the poor and the gap between poor and rich is getting wider without any ray of hope for this dejected class of the society. In this regard; certain conscious efforts are made to provide some solace in shape of government’s income support program offering monthly stipend to poor households. Yet as stated by the participants; such concrete initiatives lack transparency and driven by nepotism with lots of loopholes in its mechanism.

As one of the participants told, “Government is giving away fix amount of money under the income support program but I am mostly denied this facility and come back after listening to excuses of concerned staff who keep on deferring my payment. I don’t understand their procedures and nobody is ready to help me out. As a matter of fact; we are not able to get

benefit of this support program as the government is least concerned about our woes and as always we are on our own to face the money crunch. (P-2)”

There is also another key issue of getting proper medical care since poor are much affected and they don't get proper health facilities in the government hospitals as claimed by top officials. Further the health facilities provided by private hospitals are simply out of their range. As one participant stated his concern as below:

“When we go to the government hospital thinking that we would receive free treatment but it doesn't happen like that and doctors make us feel inferior and just give us the prescription as we have to buy the medicines from our own pocket. If we had to purchase expensive medicines from outside then what is the benefit of these hospitals and where we should go for our relief? Also mostly government run dispensary remains out of medicine stock and their staff resort to insulting remarks that are quite unbearable for us. (P-3)”

The poor people has high hope in their children as they consider their kids to be only asset who can be a great source of happiness for them once they get good education and grow to become some professional and earn a better living for them. However imparting better education to ones' children in this country is not that easy and for a poor the government schools remains the only option which offers orthodox and low standard of education to its students. “My two children are school going and it's very difficult for me to manage because one thousand rupees is the fee of one child and I have recently got them admitted in school so I had to give three thousands in total as the admission fee and bought books, bags and school shoes for them. All these things are quite too expensive for me to afford but I don't send them to government school because of low standard of education being imparted there. (P-5)”

It has been noted from the interview transcripts that all the participants are fully aware of the power of knowledge and want to send their children to schools in order to get them educated and break the vicious circle of poverty no matter how difficult it is. From the above mentioned narratives; it is concluded that the role of good governance, better education for all with tolerant behaviors and well developed infrastructure are pivotal in reducing poverty from any society.

Theme 5: *Emotional Pressures*

Emotional tensions and pressures are the key effects of poverty. The people who fall prey to poverty are bound to experience extreme frustration as they feel emotionally broken and very much stressed due to inability to fulfill their needs. And such dismal scenario is prone to escalate the social problems like marital tensions, domestic violence and drug addiction.

“We are so poor since my husband did not work and fell victim to the drug addiction. During his intolerable state of this addiction he would go berserk and beat me up to snatch my wallet and took the money to buy drugs. One day he broke my arm and bruised my face during a scuffle. This dilemma brought me to a verge of committing suicide as I earnestly solicited to opt for dying along with my daughter so this unbearable suffering could end. (P-6)”

All the participants expressed their consent on one point that fulfilling the wishes of their children is their prime objective of life and their frustration is at its peak once they realize that what they want is out of their reach to provide.

“Sometimes my children feel envy of the children of other families and keep asking for stuff like eating fast food, shoes, toys etc. but I fail to fulfill their innocent wishes and give them hope to buy everything for them soon and that soon never comes, (P-7)”

Discussions

This study portrayed the actual picture of poverty through real life experiences of lowest income people by using phenomenological methodology. Based on the narrations recorded by the poverty victims through face to face discussion; this study revealed that poor people in Pakistan perceive poverty as deprivation of necessities of life such as shelter, clothing, education, health service, and other physiological needs. The elaboration of poverty given by poor people during the talk sessions is very much congruent with previous concepts and available definitions on poverty as provided by the different researchers (Teerakul et al., 2012; World Bank, 2007; KIPPRA, 2005; OECD, 2001; Booth, 1989). Awan, Malik, Sarwar and Waqas (2011) claimed that education and human capital are necessary for economic development as well as to eradicate the poverty. Furthermore, the education has indirect yet most emphatic impact on poverty since higher education helps in getting better jobs that lead to increases in income and better standard of life becomes easy to be accomplished (Awan et al., 2011; Jeffery and Basu, 1996). In this study the participants also shared their views and gave vent to their inner feelings as they categorically mentioned the inequality and discrimination faced by them. They expressed bitter experiences of being humiliated and considered to be a curse having no respect in the society and they perceived that affluent class always receives more attention and importance. Another finding of this study revealed that poor people have high hopes in government of the day and urged the high-ups to play their due role in poverty reduction. Unfortunately Pakistan has a feeble administrative system with under-developed infrastructure where impoverished class has always struggled to claim their legitimate rights specially in having access to social services and facilities. Having said that; the state government has done its utmost to provides micro credit facilities to all and sundry (Yusuf, Shirazi and Ghani, 2016), however the size of population and increasing number of poor class has been detrimental to achieving the required results thus access to

these financial services becomes difficult (Ghalib, Malki and Imai, 2011). The poor people spoke of their bad dejections and feeling emotionally broken owing to which many individuals commit suicide or become drug addicted. Generally poor people are exploited by the state and society, the poor people has low participation in decision making and also lack in political influence and power, due to this their lives are affected (Chani et al., 2011). Rodrik (2005) and Lopez and Humberto (2004) suggested that different kinds of strategies should be developed to cope up with problem of poverty. It is therefore speculated that poverty covers social and economic indicators such income, education, health facilities, access to food, social status, self-respect and self-actualization.

Conclusion

Primary focus of the study was to develop a holistic understanding about the lived experiences of people living in poverty. As it's a social phenomenon so interpretivism paradigm was employed to have an in-depth understanding that people spoke about the phenomenon of poverty. Because of this subjective assessment poverty descriptions and experiences do vary depending upon the context. Based on the phenomenological analysis it can be inferred that people experiencing poverty in Pakistan describe it in terms of extreme deprivation of basic needs like food, shelter and clothing. A poor person cannot think beyond the basic necessities of life. Even health and education becomes necessary for them. Societal brutality and inequality makes the situation of the poor even more adverse. A sense of social exclusion and inferiority complexes results in emotional distress for the poor class. Whenever scarce resources become a hindrance in fulfilling children's basic needs; it gives way to increase in marital tensions and drug addiction cases as poor people seek to take refuge in some sort of mischievous activity in order to release frustration. Moreover the participants did blame the poor governmental reforms and lack of infrastructure that falls short of addressing the issue of poverty. Poverty is deemed to be both a social problem and an economic problem. Poverty may be essentially translated into structural violence and restraints human potential through social dynamics and structure of society (Fiske, 1999). There is no relief for the poor neither from the government nor from the society.

The future researchers may use this study in understanding the psychological and physiological hardships faced by the poor. It enhances the literature by improving understanding of poverty in a developing country's context where people are living under extreme poverty. This study also enriches the literature with qualitative empirical evidences. This research results may help policy makers to make reforms and necessary improvements in the infrastructure so that efforts for eradication of poverty and relief to the poor become fruitful. Likewise, Strategies are formulated to help people how to come out poverty and how to avoid poverty. For formulating such strategies policy makers may need valuable information on poor, such as causes of poverty, feeling, pain and intensity of deprivation, frustration, sentiments and viciousness. So this study may help the policy

makers in obtaining crucial dimensions of poverty which cannot be obtained or readily measureable through quantitative research method.

In future due consideration should be given to the strategies and policies designed to achieve better economic growth and better financial support programs should be proposed for breaking the vicious circle of poverty. Further; the future researchers should conduct real surveys to get factual statistics regarding the deprived class and its rising numbers in the society since this data would be pivotal to develop far reaching policies to help address this menace of poverty in real terms. The practitioners and researchers are directed to exercise caution in determining the current or changing poverty status.

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