

FEMALES EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS AND SEX DISCRIMINATION IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The presence of a significant proportion of gender discrimination of women' - is common only occurring in our society as well as in our country. In eastern countries gender discrimination is more prominent. People of eastern society don't give rights to women. Even majority of eastern countries are claimed to be an Islamic country and Islam has given women rights equal to men. The debate is surrounding on why there is gender discrimination for women particularly at college level. Issues have ranged from the reasons why the people or families do gender discrimination, why females do not get permission for studies from their home. Past record shows only 25% females are literate in our country but their standard of education is not good and remaining 75% are illiterate. The main purpose of this study was to gather information on the gender discrimination and to explore the causes of gender and its effects on women education. For this purpose comprehensive structured questionnaire discrimination was used as a tool to collect the data. The collected data was processed and then its analysis was made through frequency tabulation method. The finding suggests that there are some reasons causes of gender discrimination done by society and family with females.

Keywords: Gender, Discrimination, Education, NGO, Dilemma

INTRODUCTION

Gender discrimination is prejudice or discrimination based on a person's sex or gender. It can affect any gender, but it is particularly affecting women and girls in Pakistan. Gender discrimination is a part of Pakistani society. It has been linked to stereotypes and gender roles, and may include the belief that one sex or gender is intrinsically superior to another. Because of gender discrimination, girls and women do not have the same opportunities as boys and men for education, meaningful careers, political influence, and economic advancement.

Definition of Gender

"The gender-related identity, appearance, or mannerisms or gender-related characteristics of an individual, with or without regard to individual's designated sex at birth"^{vi}

Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination is present in all society whether it is eastern or it is western society. But from past studied and researches it shows it is more prominent in Eastern society in education. Women have not right to get higher education or to enrolled in any college for higher studies after matriculation because of their old traditions, parents are not giving permission and any other factors level and then compares the results with racism, and said

^{vi} Feder, Jody and Cynthia Brouger (July 15, 2013). "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination in Employment: A Legal Analysis of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)"

also implies. In encyclopedia of Political science, Fred studied women education status at college

*"When you argue ... that since fewer women write good poetry this justifies their total exclusion, you are taking a position analogous to that of the racist—I might call you in this case a 'sexist' ... Both the racist and the sexist are acting as if all that has happened had never happened, and both of them are making decisions and coming to conclusions about someone's value by referring to factors which are in both cases irrelevant."*ⁱ

*"Gender equality means both men and women can exercise their rights and realize their full human potential, regardless of their gender"*ⁱⁱ

Gender Inequality

Today social class is based in the economy and in the status achieved within that realm. In the past social class rested in part on achieved status in the economic activities of the society, but also in great part on the ascribed status of the family. That is one could earn position in the class system but family status helped gain and maintain that position. The ethnic and racial status affects ones position in the economy.

*"Gender inequality refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender. It arises from differences in socially constructed gender roles as well as biologically through chromosomes, brain structure, and hormonal differences."*ⁱⁱⁱ

Women academics and university staff members faced similar rather more diverse discrimination. Not only was this inherently damaging the careers and ambitions of those women, but also had a negative effect on future generations of female research students, academic and professional staff and more generally the academic discipline (Farooq1996).The study indicates that disparity in higher education exists in rural areas of Pakistan which on many grounds affects gender development. For females there is no equality. Females are facing difficulties in getting higher education cause of gender discrimination. Gender equality in higher education can help in reducing the economic problems and can plane the path of gender development.

Educated female always play a significant and essential role in all fields of life. The development of female higher education practices has led to worldwide discussion of how to convey an equal education opportunity for all without any sort of discrimination. The female higher education is left behind in spite of the fact that it is most effective and smart investment for economic growth of and development of any country around the globe There is need of policy formulation focused on women empowerment in higher education for the purpose of career development, employment, decision-making and providing legal, political, economic and social rights to women.

According to Terry and Thomas

"Equal treatment of genders (female/male) of our society who are entitled to participate in and enjoy the benefits of higher educational opportunities. All students and adults have the

ⁱ Foster, Carly Hayden (2011). "Sexism". In Kurlan, George Thomas. The Encyclopedia of Political Science. CQ Press.

ⁱⁱ From Canadian International Development Agency publication on Gender Equality

ⁱⁱⁱ Wood, Julia. Gendered Lives. 6th. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2005.

equal opportunity to participate fully and to experience success and human dignity while developing skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to contribute meaningfully to society.”^{iv}

“Gender discrimination against women in the market place reduces the available talent in an economy, which has negative economic consequences. Gender discrimination takes many forms. Many social practices seen as normal from a religious or cultural point of view (which may have deep historical roots) have women out of the economic mainstream. These social practices may have profound economic consequences because they do not allow society to take advantage of the talent inherent in women”^v

Gender in Pakistan

Poverty in Pakistan has historically been higher in rural areas and lower in the cities. Out of the total 47 million living below the poverty line, 35 million live in rural areas. Poverty rose sharply in the rural areas in the 1990s and the gap in income between urban and rural areas of the country became more significant. This trend has been attributed to a disproportionate impact of the economic slowdown in the rural areas caused by low economic growth, decline in public sector development spending and lower worker remunerations.

The gender discriminatory practices in Pakistani society also shape the distribution of poverty in the country. Traditional gender roles in Pakistan define the woman's place as in the home and not in the workplace, and define the man as the breadwinner. Consequently, the society invests far less in women than man. Women in Pakistan suffer from poverty of opportunities throughout their lives. Female literacy in Pakistan is 29% compared to male literacy at 55%. In legislative bodies women constitute less than 3% of the legislature elected on general seats.

The 1973 constitutional reform allowed reserved seats for women in both houses of parliament for a period of 20 years, thus ensuring that women would be represented in parliament regardless of whether or not they are elected on general seats. This provision lapsed in 1993, so parliaments elected subsequently did not have reserved seats for women. Reserved seats for women have been restored in the elections scheduled for October 2002, and will constitute 17% of the strength of parliament. Female labor rates in Pakistan are exceptionally low. All this, coupled with rise of honor killings against women, a legal system that is regarded as misogynistic, and the intransigent denial of these problems by the Pakistan government, as well as their institutionalized harassment of women's rights groups operating in the country contribute the deteriorating situation.

RATIONALES BEHIND GENDER INEQUALITIES AND DISCRIMINATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Co-education

A significant and increasing proportion of higher education institutions have been established by the private sector, and most are co-educational. This inhibits the access of women and girls from traditional communities. In some areas there are many co-education institutions where female/males can get higher education but due to strict family, tribal and religious customs prohibit female to get education with males. This is main hurdle in female higher education which creates differences.

^{iv} Terry, G., & Thomas, T. B. (1997). International Dictionary of Education. London:Kogan

^v Berta – Esteve – Volast, 2004, “Gender discrimination and Growth: Theory and Evidence from India,” London, London School of Economics and Political Sciences

Interface between Gender and Wealth-Based Disparities

The inter-relationship between poverty, livelihood and investment decisions at the household level Operate in different ways in different societies. In some, parents do not invest in the education of their daughters and in very poor households, girls are withdrawn from school. Mostly of the families do not allow and invest on the girls higher education but give preferences to invest on boys because according to them instead of girls, investing on boys is beneficial output because girls are not permitted to do job so its waste less investment on them.

Security Issues

The location (rural, remote/hilly/desert) of institutions affects girls more than boys, in particular in countries where roads and public transport have not penetrated rural and remote areas. Availability of institutions/universities within reach is an important determinant. Travelling long distances in public transport is an important security issue and this is particularly significant in societies where girls are not permitted to travel alone or have to be escorted. It should, moreover, be noted that female teachers, as well as students, can be the victims of violence: a report by USAID in rural areas of Pakistan found that female teachers were frequently threatened or assaulted in the rural areas or far flung areas where they work and are frightened to leave the institute. As well as the severe impact on these women, this will discourage other women from working as teachers, which in turn further damages girls' educational prospects.

Early Marriages

Early marriage, household responsibilities, pressure to work, family honor and related issues inhibit girls and women from access and completing school. Early female marriage is based on the assumptions that good marriage' is the most important way to secure a girl's wellbeing, security and respect. Marriage of a girl is the second name of respect and fulfillment of desires and emotions in Muslim community. Additionally it is consider the duty of parents to make an early arrangement of marriage to fulfill the responsibility of being as parents in most of areas in Pakistan.

However, according to Islamic law, "a woman cannot be forced to marry against her will. After marriage she enjoys similar rights in most of the affairs. The Quran says; 'and they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them' (2:228). According to the Prophet (P.B.U.H) men have no preference over women and women have no preference over men, both have equal rights on each other's.

"In many societies a young woman's place is seen as in the home after minimum education. Yet, she is doubly disadvantaged because her youth reduces her status within her household and community. Because she does not have the same standing as her male peers, she is not perceived to have the same skills or capabilities, higher studies, and so there is less value in educating her for higher studies. This inevitably contributes to the view that a 'good marriage' is the most important way to secure a girl's well-being"^{vi}

For families facing chronic poverty, marriage often seems like the best way to safeguard girls' futures and lighten their economic burden. The high costs of higher education and the perception of girls' potential to earn an income as comparatively poor, pushes girls out of

^{vi} Juliette, M. & Rowan, H. (2011). Researchers: ... Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls' Education 2011. 1. Contents.

their homes and schools and into marriage, marriage of school-aged girls was considered the main barrier to achieving higher education and promoting gender equality for girls, (Myers and Rowan Harvey, 2011). Higher education based interventions interrupt and prevents early and forced marriage.

IMPACT AND ROLE OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION ON GENDER DEVELOPMENT

Gender discrimination exists in all parts of Pakistan but it is higher in rural areas and particularly in rural areas of KPK and Baluchistan provinces of Pakistan. Gender discrimination exists in family, marriage, children education, health and career development, in economic field and particularly in employment a women is working more hours and earning less as compare to men cause of less qualification. Gender discrimination hindering the woman participations in getting higher education and women has no property & political right in the area, which is negatively affecting development. Most of the female are totally dependent on men economically, which is also the reason of their exclusion from development. Gender discrimination and inequality hinders poverty alleviation and female education helps in poverty alleviation. Women fertility right helps in poverty alleviation while discrimination in higher education and jobs, distribution of resources affect poverty alleviation. The study depicts that if skill enhancement opportunities through higher education not provided to women equally it would affect gender development.

“Female higher education plays a very significant and crucial role in the development of a nation, especially in the economic development of a country. But female education in rural areas of Pakistan, its status and standard is mainly at the lowest level. Thousands of girls’ otherwise intelligent and capable to get higher education are deprived because of diverse socio-cultural, economic reasons and gender prejudices. Due to this reason, they are unable to play an active role in the development of society”^{vii}

PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

“Gender Mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. The government of Pakistan should also adopt this strategy to remove the inequalities and discrimination barriers in higher education of rural areas. It is a process rather than a goal of creating knowledge and awareness of and responsibility for gender equality among all education professionals engaged in tertiary education. It is not an end in itself but a strategy, an approach, a means to achieve the goal of gender equality in higher education institutions. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities – education policy, curriculum, research, advocacy, resource allocation, facilities and planning, implementation and monitoring of tertiary education programs.”

Mainstreaming Gender in Higher Education has Necessarily To Start With The Government (Political Leaders, Administrators, Heads of Institutions of Higher Education)

High level political and administrative commitment is essential to ensure it is done across the board and is not a small one- off project.

The first step is to get everyone on board. National and international institutions committed to mainstreaming gender need to create advocacy and research groups to gather, compile and

^{vii} Parveen, S. (2008). Female Education and National Development: as Viewed by Women Activist and Advocates. Three Bulletin of Education and Research, 30, 33-41.

analyze data (quantitative and qualitative) on gender inequality in access, participation, teaching-learning, gender and social stereotyping, safety and harassment and related issues.

Recognizing the enormity of the challenge by all stakeholders is the essential first step towards mainstreaming.

- i. The second step is to identify what needs to be done – at which level, in which institutions, and the backward (elementary and secondary education) and forward linkages (higher education, employment and livelihood) that have to be built. Priority setting at this stage is critical to ensure that the goals set are not unrealistic and that the plan is feasible.
- ii. The third step is to constitute an empowered group that will draw on the evidence and take the process forward.
- iii. The fourth step is to develop a gender mainstreaming plan for different layers/sectors in higher education.

A Set of Non-Negotiable or Enabling Guidelines on Gender Equality in Tertiary Education should be developed

- i. In order to make the process meaningful, gender issues need to be addressed alongwith issues of social disparities, ability related inequalities.
- ii. Training a group of people drawn from different institutions in gender mainstreaming has limited value because the trainees have to go back and work among people who have not shared the same experience. They are likely to feel isolated and may gradually lose their enthusiasm. Training programs that involve group of people who work together and have different responsibilities in the same organization have greater impact. They don't only reinforce and encourage each other, but are also able to create a conducive environment for change.
- iii. Analyzing the problem of limited impact of training programs highlights that gender sensitization is not a one-shot event, but a long drawn out process. It may begin with a training program leading to major managerial adjustments. Entrusting the responsibility for gender mainstreaming to an external group of facilitators does not leave a lasting impact on the organization. It can, at best, change the attitudes of a few individuals. Lasting impact can be achieved only if people from within the organization are oriented and empowered to address organizational and management issues simultaneously—the essential building blocks of a successful gender mainstreaming program.

Once the Gender Mainstreaming Agenda is Agreed on, It is Important to Create Structures and Mechanisms That Facilitate the Process

Timely norms, guidelines, rules and regulations need to be framed or amended. Every initiative gets its initial momentum from leaders.

Within a group, there are always those who break the ice and make the journey less formidable for others. It is therefore important to identify such leaders in government, tertiary education institutions, among the faculty and students, encourage them, nurture them and create opportunities for experience sharing, and mutual support and encouragement.

Finally, the promoters and managers (in administration, in institutions, among the faculty and students) of the mainstreaming exercise have to prepare and continuously work on a dynamic checklist. In the initial stage the checklist may start with the following:

- i. Has the process helped identify gender gaps in each sector / institution? •What are the underlying causes for these gaps? Are there other disadvantaged groups such as short-term and long-term migrants who may experience language barriers?
- ii. Have the emerging gender issues been analyzed?
- iii. What could be the best advocacy strategy to create a cocoon that could nurture and support the main streaming process?
- iv. Does the mainstreaming process and the concomitant implementation structure provide for equal participation of women and men and other disadvantaged groups?
- v. Has the feedback from the administrators, students and faculty been compiled and shared across the board?
- vi. Has the mainstreaming plan been reviewed in the light of the feedback?
- vii. Is the leadership (political, institutional, administrative as the case may be) on board?

Promote Research on Gender inequality

The research centers should make and the aim of these centers should be to encourage and promote research on women's studies and add to the body of knowledge that informs higher education.

Create and Support Women-Only Universities

Pakistan should create Women's University in rural areas to promote and encourage women to move from school to higher education.

Provide Stipends and Scholarships for Girls

The government of Pakistan institutes scholarships and stipends to meet the expenditure of higher studies for women and encourage women to move from higher secondary education to universities.

SOLUTION FOR GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Various movements, programs are being carried out by the Government, voluntary organizations and by lot of social activities for women's development and against the gender discrimination.^[10]

Education

Education develops the skills, imparts knowledge, changes the attitude and improves the self-confidence. It provides employment opportunity and increases income. Hence educating women is the prime factor to combat gender discriminate and for the up-liftment of women. Not only the female, the society must be educated to give equal right for female.

Employment

Employment gives the income and improves the economic position of the women. Employed women are given importance by the family members. Employment gives the economic independence for the women.

Empowerment

Empowering women with the help of laws, education and employment will make the society to accept the women as an equal gender like male. Female also has all the potential and empowering women will help to use her full capability and mitigate the economic dependency of women.

Self-confidence

Due to prolonged supplement, Indian women, an especially uneducated and unemployed woman hasn't had the self-confidence. Women need self-confidence to fight against all the atrocities against her and to live self-esteemed life. Hence, boosting the morale and self-confidence of the women, is the key to eliminate the inferior complex of her.

Decision Making

Even in the family as well as in the society the decision making power of women is denied. Mostly males make the importance decision in the family and in the society. This makes women as voice less and destroys herself confidence and she feels less important in the family as well as in the society. So, to end gender discrimination women must empower with decision making power.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The questionnaire is used in this research. 10 students from each different colleges of women were selected through random sampling technique. In this way the sampling of this study was based on hundred students in total. The objective of the study is to find out the reason of gender discrimination with women at college level. Descriptive research refers to methods used in exploring a query or subject where the methods measure results instead of trying to predict outcomes or actions or determine cause and effect. Some types of descriptive research methods include surveys, analyses, case studies, observation and review of published reports or results. For this purpose, a questionnaire was prepared which covered the aspects of the problem under study i.e. the reason of gender discrimination with women at college level.

To avoid ambiguity, the questions were constructed in simple and clear words. The students were required to tick mark the relevant one. It was finalized after a detailed discussion, consideration and re-arrangement and after checking its relevancy to the topic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 01. Women may not have equal rights as compared to men

Item No.	Statement	Yes	No	Total
1	Do you think women do not get equal right as compare to men?	67 67%	33 33%	100 100%
2	Do you think male member of family are given priority as compared to women?	73 73%	27 27%	100 100%
3	Do you think women get permission easily to get higher education?	75 75%	25 25%	100 100%
4	Do you think we are living in male dominating society?	80 80%	20 20%	100 100%

Above table shows that 67% respondents were agreed on the fact that women do not get equal right as compare to men while 33% were disagreed. 73% respondents were agreed on the fact that male member of family are given priority as compared to women while 27% were disagreed. 75% respondents were agreed on the fact that women get permission easily to get higher education while 25% were disagreed. 80% respondents were agreed that we are living in male dominating society while 20% respondents were disagreed. Hence null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that Women have equal rights as compared to men

Table 02. Women may be restricted to house hold activities

Item No	Statement	Yes	No	Total
1	Do you think women serve their time more on home chores as compare to study due to pressure of elders?	75 75%	25 25%	80 100%
2	Do you think it is only responsibility of women to do house hold activity?	77 77%	23 23 %	80 100%
3	Do you think women are restricted to house hold activities?	82 82%	15 15%	80 100%
4	Do you think women do not have enough intelligence to get higher education?	70 70%	30 30%	80 100%

Above table shows that 75% respondents were agreed on the fact that women serve their time more on home chores as compare to study due to pressure of elders while 25% were disagreed. 77% respondents were agreed on the fact that it is only responsibility of women to do house hold activity while 23% were disagreed. 82% respondents were agreed on the fact that women are restricted to house hold activities while 15% were disagreed. 70% respondents were agreed that women do not have enough intelligence to get higher education study while 30 % were disagreed. Hence null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded Women are restricted to house hold activities.

Table 03. Women may be degraded from the day of their birth

Item No	Statement	Yes	No	Total
1	Do you think women gets all right from the day of their birth?	78 78%	22 22%	80 100%
2	Do you think women take interest in their high education?	67 67%	33 33%	80 100%
3	Do you think women are degraded from the day of their birth?	72 72%	28 28%	80 100%
4	Do you agree that parents do not welcome the birth of a baby girl?	55 55%	45 45%	80 100%

Above table shows that 78% respondents were agreed on the fact that women gets all right from the day of their birth while 22% were disagreed. 67% respondents were agreed on the fact that women take interest in their high education While 33% were disagreed. 72% respondents were agreed on the fact that women are degraded from the day of their birth while 28% were disagreed. 55% respondents were agreed on the fact that parents do not welcome the birth of a baby girl while 45% were disagreed. Hence null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded Women are degraded from the day of their birth.

CONCLUSION

The results of the research are considered very important and it can be concluded gender discrimination is done in our society. It can be concluded that early marriage of girls, poverty, lack of awareness of parents about the importance of female education, domestic work prevented female new generations from entering into further higher education. Pakistan has paid a little attention in gender equality in higher education. Female higher education has been an orphan child in our society due to the double standards. No economic progress is possible without female higher education as it requires trained human resources. We cannot

progress economically, socially and spiritually, until and unless we involve females. Gender equality is a key to all kind of progress. No country has progressed without involving women in education. The secret of many countries' development in term of education imbedded is imbedded to female education. Both countries educational policy focus on gender equality. Therefore, in order to bring gender equality, it is essential to provide equal opportunities to both; men and women in education and higher education and to make female equally empowered as men in decision making in every mode of life. It is very essential to educate women in male dominated society such as Pakistan because “educating girls delivers a high return than other investment in the developing world”

RECOMENDATIONS

Following are the recommendations of the research study:

1. Equal educational opportunities should be provided to women,;
2. skill-training facilities should be provided to them;
3. women should be given equal right and power of decision-making;
4. there is a need to bring equality in resources distribution;
5. equal opportunities of participation should be given to both genders in various activities;
6. equal opportunities should be given to the women inside the family affairs as well as outside the family;
7. equal opportunities should be provided to women in different jobs. It will be helpful in poverty alleviation.

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