

Gender Discrimination against Females at Family Setting and its Impact on their Decision- Making: A Sociological Assessment Study of Quetta City

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Abstract

The conception of gender is multilayered discriminating mechanism which is used by various cultures as an instrument of exploitation. The segregation between male and female based upon their gender accompany towards the path of disparity among them. In male dominated cultures, females are the soft target of discrimination based on their gender. The purpose of this research was to see how gender discrimination against females at family setting impact their decision-making in the family matters. The respondents of this study were mainly students, faculty, and staff members of five higher educational institutes of Quetta city. The conceptual framework used in this study was Family based gender-bias. The findings suggest that higher the discrimination against females at family setting lower will be the decision-making authority of females in the family matters. It is recommended that applauding the gender equality brings long lasting systematic change at societal, individual and organizational level (We Effect, 2019). This ultimately leads to the empowerment of women, which brings more sustaining and peaceful environment in the family.

Key Word: Gender, Gender discrimination, Decision-making, Quetta

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Introduction

Gender is the societal difference between male and female which is constructed by the society of a particular culture (Henslin, J. M., & Nelson, A., 1997). Gender is a multi-dimensional apparatus of social practices that produces differentiation between males and females, and give rise to inequality (Wharton, A. S., 2012). The gender discrimination starts from the family. This discrimination in adulthood is mostly rooted in the family environment during the childhood period (Bharadwaj, P., Dahl, G. B, & Sheth, K., 2015). Moreover, the author Zarar R, Buksh M, Khaskheil WA, (2017) suggest that due to this discrimination women are kept less worthy in terms of education and medical cure. They have no rights to possess a property and they are not supposed to use their abilities and potential. The phenomena of discrimination based on gender exist in all parts of Pakistan but it is more prevalent in the rural setup of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces (Alam, Anwar, 2011). In context of Balochistan, due to male domination, it became an arena of oppression for female gender. Balochistan is a multi-ethnic province where most of the cultures are patriarchal in its nature. Moreover, Muhammad, M. G., (2016) mentioned that one of the familiar reasons behind the discrimination against females is the strict cultural norms and values in Balochistan.

This study mainly focuses on the consequences of gender discrimination on females and how it impacts their decision-making authority in the family setting. Other researches in this area seek to find those factors which gives authority to females for their decisions (Kritz, M., and Makina, Adebuseye, P., 1999). In the same way, few spotlight on the fact that how decision-making authority changes with a change in the gender roles in rural setup of the Punjab province (Farooq, A & K. Kayani, A., 2014). Furthermore, some find out that the main socio-demographic sources for the inequality in country like Pakistan (Raza, A. & Sohaib, M, H, 2010), and others seeks to find out the elements which constitute women's autonomy in rural areas of Pakistan (Sathar, Z.A and Kazi, S., 2000). Contrary to the fact, this study calls attention to the issue of gender discrimination especially discrimination against females at their home and how this discrimination affects their decision-making authority in the family matters.

Literature Review

In Balochistan, the women are limited to the household activities. The rigid culture allows only male to take the major responsibilities of the life. This is mainly due to patriarchy. Patriarchy is defined as male domination and the power association by which men subordinate women and a mechanism where women are putted inferior (Alam, Anwar, 2011). A recognized sociological frame work describe that two sexes of males and females are born impartial and it is the socialization process during childhood which teaches various gender roles (Renwicj, D., et al., 2009). Similarly, Rokeach, (1979), suggests that the way we perceive these gender differences within our mind becomes part of our mental thought process, which untimely becomes the structure of our cultural values.

In Pakistani society, the conventional gender roles kept women mostly at home and gives the role of breadwinner to men. Therefore, the investments on females are less than that of males (Alam, Anwar, 2011). Furthermore, the important factor which is affected by this kind of discrimination is the decision-making authority of the female in the household activities.

In Balochistan the gender discrimination against females is seems to be normal and it is considered to be the norms of the culture. Not only the males but females also consider these distinctions and subordination to be just. These practices are normalized in the society. The interpretation to this type of behavior is explained by Wharton, A. S., (2012), who states that the forces through which gender is replicated is the institutionalization and legitimation. Hence, gender inequality is institutionalized and it is considered as an orderly pattern of life.

The only way to achieve gender equality is to bring a change in these institutionalized relationships

Literature (Zarar R, et al. 2017) suggests that narrow views, rigid mentality and a strong faithfulness to the traditional cultural values are the main reason of gender discrimination against females in Balochistan. Alam, Anwar, (2011) states that due to gender discrimination against female in Balochistan, a large number of women's population did not contribute for the well-being of society; therefore, this is one of the reasons for backwardness and poverty in the province of Balochistan. Additionally, Zarar, R et al. (2017), states that, in the today's society, the economic prosperity of a nation is not possible if half of the population is kept aside.

Defining discrimination and gender discrimination

Allport, (1954) narrates that conventionally, discrimination is the inequitable and pessimistic attitudes and actions which aim to limit or deny the equal treatment of all human beings. Furthermore, gender discrimination can also take the form of isolation, exclusion from the society and the prevention of communal association (Dipboye, R. L. & Collela, A., 2005).

Gender inequality

Raza, A, and Sohaib, Murad, H (2010), states that mostly cultural factors produce the gap between males and females in Pakistan. Eden, L. and Gupta, S. (2017) seeks the main factors such as background (environment, policy) and culture is the main cause behind the gender inequalities across the countries and within the countries.

Sweeney, K. (2008) shed lights on the power relationships within the individual relationships are used to maintain the system of social stratification. In the institution of marriage, social stratification is used to control decision-making authority.

Preference of son over girl child

In many parts of the world, male child is preferred over female child. Evidence to the fact literature suggest that even in the most developed countries like United States of America, couple prefer son over daughter (Dahl, Gordon B. and Enrico Moretti, 2008).

Gender roles and decision-making authority

The authors Farooq, A. and K. Kayani, A. (2014), have studied the decision-making authority of both genders in the family matters such as property allocation, household purchases, education and the conflicts within the family structure in the rural environment of the villages of Punjab. The author is of the opinion that traditional gender roles especially relating to women had changed from 1980s, mainly due to the educational factor which had changed the autonomy of females. The attitude towards females especially daughter has been changed.

Kritz, M., and Makinwa, Adebuseye, P. (1999) seek the determinants of decision-making authority of wife. They came up with the findings that the ethnicity of the wife plays vital role in the granting authority to the wife to make decisions in country like Nigeria. Similarly, the other factor which contributes to the authority of wife in making decisions is the contribution of the wife in the household expenditures (Deb, S., 2015). But from the perspective of economists, it mainly determined by the economic determinants of each spouse as well. The one who is having more contribution to the expenses of the family will be having more authority in such kind of decisions. According to Elder, H. W and P. M. Rudolph (2003), the important aspect which influences the decision of women and men in family setting is the gender status. A study conducted by the Bertocchi, Bruntti and Torricelli (2012) had investigated the factors which determine the decision-making authority of the females in family decision on financial choices and concluded that the chances of wife decision-making authority is enhanced with the factors like her age, education, qualities of husbands, the size of the family and income (Deb, S, 2015).

Impact of the gender discrimination on women

Coming towards the repercussions of gender-based discrimination against women, Sprock and Yoder, (1997) narrates that due to discrimination, women are at higher danger of depression.

Rationale of Study

The research finding can be used by the policy makers and state authorities to find the possible solution for the gender discrimination in working places and empowering household wives. It can help the policy makers to identify the hurdles for the females. It can bring awareness in the public regarding gender discrimination against females. Moreover, a nation's well-being is mostly related to the equal opportunities and ensuring equal rights of females.

Research Methodology

In this research quantitative, explanatory research methodology was used to seek the causal relationship between two variables such as gender discrimination against females at family setting and its impact on their decision making in the family matters. Stratified random sampling technique

was used due to the shared attributes of the members. The geographical range of the study was Quetta city. Five higher educational institutes which are University of Balochistan, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University, Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences, Bolan Medical College and Alhumd Islamic University were focused under the sample size. The number of respondents of the study was 380, which includes students, faculty and staff members.

Limitations of Study:

The limitations which occur in this study was that due to COVID-19 as most of the universities were closed and only limited number of administrative staffs, faculty members and students were available.

Reliability test:

In order to seek the internal consistency of variables, reliability (Cronbach's alpha) test was used. In this study the value of gender equitable men (GEM) was ($\alpha=0.968$), women empowerment ($\alpha=0.950$) with 5-items, decision-making authority ($\alpha= 0.945$) with 10-items, gender norm attitude ($\alpha=0.967$) with 33-items and attitude towards women scale was ($\alpha=0.787$) with 13-items. The values of all variables were reliable and significant.

Results and discussion:

Simple Linear Regression test was applied on the score of Attitudes toward women scale, Gender Norm Attitudes Scale, Gender Equitable Men Scale, Women Empowerment Scale and score of Decision-Making Authority scale to seek the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the study.

Attitude towards women scale

The respondents were having equalitarian views regarding equal household responsibilities, marriage of own choice, equal professional opportunities, equal educational opportunities, and equal obligation in up-bringing of children and rejected traditional gender and marriage roles for women. But on the other hand, traditional, and conservative attitude were observed in terms of intellectual abilities of women, freedom of action, and stereotypical views of women's speech.

In other words it means that females are not discriminated in equal household chores, own choice of marriage partner, equal professional and educational opportunities, brought up of children and patriarchal cultural values regarding gender roles.

Gender Norm Attitudes Scale

Two types of trends emerged from this scale. First concerns with the beliefs in preserving the privileges and rights of men while the second deals with the promoting equity for women.

Female Gender Roles Subscale

The overall responses of the respondents were dichotomous and it was divided into conservative and equalitarian approaches. On the items of economic freedom, and selection of life partner, the respondents recorded equalitarian attitude whereas on the items of mobility of women during night, consultation with female doctors and motherhood task of women they recorded conservative discriminatory attitude. This signifies that female does face discrimination in their mobility, exclusive motherhood responsibilities and preference of female over male doctor for consultation.

Table-1 Female Gender Roles Subscale

Attitude	Agree	Disagree
Girls can live by their own, after gaining economic freedom	58.3%	41.7%
Females should choose life partner by their own	86%	13.9%
Last decision regarding the choice of her husband should be taken by her father	46.8%	53.2%
Mobility of females during night	39.5%	60.5%
Consultation with only female doctors	65%	35%
Women's basic tasks is motherhood	50.7%	49.3%

Marriage Gender Roles Subscale

On items such as husband's cheating on wife, fulfilling every wish of men, decisions by husband regarding wife's life, the birth of male child by women, and the silence of women in arguing with husband in a conflict, the respondents believed in equality whereas on item of second marriage of men in case of infertility of wife, they were in the favor of men rather than women. This suggests that female does not face any discrimination in the marriage services except in the case of wife's infertility.

Table-2 Marriage Gender Roles Subscale

Attitude	Agree	Disagree
Husband's cheating on wife is normal	15.4	84.6
Fulfilling every wish of husband at home	39.7	60.3
Its husband's right to take decision regarding wife's life	31.5	68.5
Consideration of women to be precious, if she gives birth to male child	36.5	63.5
Silence of women during fight with husband	45.7	54.3
Men's second marriage is justified in case of wife's infertility	50.7	49.3

Traditional Gender Roles Subscale

The data indicates that the respondents of the study were in the favor of the traditional roles of men and women except on three items such as preference of men over women in job selection due to her fertility, preference of different professions for both genders and not working of women in case if her husband is economically well-off.

Table-3 Traditional Gender Roles Subscale

Attitude	Agree	Disagree
Men as the head of the household	78.2%	21.8%
Breadwinning as the main task of men	60.2%	39.8%
Men's main tasks are mainly outside of home	61.9%	38.1%
Girl should obey her father's wishes before she get married	67.5%	32.5%
Preference of men over women in employment due to women's fertility	38.7%	61.3%
Women should not work if husband's economical conditions are adequate	48.2%	51.8%
Profession carryout by women and men should be different	43.7%	56.3%

Women Empowerment Scale

The data suggests that most of the respondents are in view to empower their females. The females can acquire the resources of the family. As most of the respondents of this study were males, literate and city dwellers, which indicates that they allowed their females to become empower which ultimately gives them the liberty to participate in decision-making process of the family matters. Similarly, Islam was the religion of the majority of the respondents, which indicates that their religion also allows gender equity among the male and female members of the family.

Women Mobility Subscale

The result indicates low level of individual variability in the responses on the scale. Data suggests that majority of the respondents, who were mainly males, allowed their females members of the family to visit various places such as bazars, hospitals/ clinic. Even they were in the favor to allow them to visits these places which are outside the city or village. This indicates that females are discriminated in terms of mobility.

Freedom from Family Domination Subscale

The data suggests that the female respondents were having the liberty to keep their assets, such as money, land, jewelry, and livestock etc. Their assets are not forcibly taken from them without their intention by the male members of the family. Moreover, it indicates that females are not discriminated or dominated by the males at home.

Household Decision-Making Authority Scale

The data indicates that 74.9% of the respondents were of view that the male member of the family is the main bread earner and have the house ownership. This indicates the male members of the family are still dominant.

Similarly, 51.2% of the respondents states that decisions regarding their family matters is taken by the male's members. This signifies that females have a limited decision-making authority. Furthermore, 42.7% respondents' states that their spouse or parents take the major decisions of the family.

The overall assessment of the scale suggests that the main decision-making authority figure is either male, husband, spouse and parents (both father and mother).

Furthermore, data suggests that dinner, regular spending, and bigger spending are mostly decided by women of the family. Moreover, meeting with friends or relatives, spending of holidays and upbringing of children are decided by both of the spouses. The main scale with its subscales signifies that majority of the decisions are taken by the male members of the family, the possession of the house mainly belongs to males.

Table-4 Household Decision-Making Authority Scale

Attitude	Men	Women	Spouse Jointly
Decisions regarding dinner	19.3%	46.8%	33.9%
Regular spending	21.8%	50.7%	27.5%

Bigger spending	26.7%	38.1%	35.3%
Meetings with friends or relatives	23.5%	22.1%	54.5%
Spending of holidays	30.1%	16.2%	53.4%
Children's upbringing	16.3%	26.7%	56.7%

Correlation Analysis

The correlation test was conducted to measure the association between dependent and independent variables.

The negative correlation between decision-making authority and attitude towards women suggests that higher the discrimination against females in roles/ functions and rights of women in professional, marital, intellectual, economic and educational affairs, lesser will be the decision-making authority of females in their family matters.

The positive correlative between decision-making authority and gender norm attitude scale suggests that higher the egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles, higher will be the decision-making authority of females and vice versa.

The positive correlative between decision-making authority and gender equitable men scale suggests that, higher the support for gender equitable norms, higher will be the decision-making authority of females in the family setting and vice versa.

The positive correlative between decision-making authority and women empowerment scale suggests that higher the support for the empowerment of women in terms of women's mobility, freedom from family domination, economic security and contribution, higher will be the decision-making authority of females at family setting and vice versa.

Linear Regression

Decision-Making Authority and Attitudes towards Women

Simple linear regression test was conducted to explore and quantify the association between Decision-making authority (DMA) and the attitudes towards women in the family setting. The model summary shows the value of R and R^2 . The value of R is .055, whereas the value of R^2 is .003, which point out that only 3% of the variation in decision-making authority is explained by the attitude towards women. Furthermore, the ANOVA table suggests the statistical significance of the regression model. The P value is .399, which is greater than 0.05 which means that it is insignificant. This means that decision-making authority is not dependent upon the discrimination against

females in various realms such as professional, marital, economic and educational etc. In the same way, the coefficient table of regression model shows that $\beta = -.055$ that determines the relative importance of decision-making authority on attitude towards women scale.

Decision-Making Authority and Gender Norms Attitude Scale

Simple linear regression test was conducted on the score of Decision-Making Authority (DMA) and Gender Norms Attitudes Scale. The value of R was .972 and R^2 was .944 which indicates 94% of variation in Decision-making is explained by gender norms attitude. The value of ANOVA was $P=0.000$ which is significant. This contemplates that high support for equalitarian gender roles, higher will be the decision-making authority of females in family matters. The value of $\beta = .972$ that determines the relative importance of decision-making authority on gender norm attitude scale.

Decision-Making Authority and Gender Equitable Men Scale

The regression test was also conducted on the score of Decision-making authority (DMA) scale and gender equitable men (GEM) scale. The value of R was .958 and R^2 was .917 which indicates 91% of variation in decision-making is explained by gender equitable men scale. The value of ANOVA was $P=0.000$, which is significant. This reflects that high endorsement for gender equitable norms, greater will be the decision-making authority of females in familial affairs. In the same way, the coefficient table of regression model shows that $\beta = .958$ that determines the relative importance of decision-making authority on gender equitable men scale.

Decision-Making Authority and Women Empowerment Scale

A simple linear regression test was also conducted on the score of Decision-making authority (DMA) scale and Women Empowerment Scale (WES). The value of R was .984 and R^2 was .969. The value of ANOVA was $P=0.000$ which is significant. In the same way, the coefficient table of regression model shows that $\beta = .984$ that determines the relative importance of decision-making authority on women empowerment scale.

Conclusion

This research aimed to identify the various aspects of gender discrimination against females in family setting and its impact on their decision-making authority in the family affairs. Based on the quantitative analysis of gender discrimination and decision-making authority of females, it can be concluded that higher the discrimination against females in family setting, lesser will be the decision-making authority of females in the family matters.

The results indicate that decision-making authority of females is directly affected by the discrimination. The finding of study indicates that females did not face any discrimination in terms of equal house hold chores, marriage of own choice, equal professional, educational, and economic opportunities, roles based on their gender, mobility, exclusive motherhood responsibility, upbringing of children, marriage services, and violence against females in Quetta city. Nevertheless, even having much egalitarian or equalitarian acceptance for females, still the major decisions of the family is taken by the male members of family which can be husband, spouse and parents in the context of Quetta. On the other hand, decisions for daily routine such as decision regarding dinners, regular and bigger spending, etc. was mostly taken by the female members of the family. The findings also advocate the spheres where females did face discrimination were female intellect, freedom of action, stereotypical views regarding women speech, preference of male doctor over female for consultation, wife's infertility, and possessions of the house. This all kind of discrimination limits the decision-making authority of females. Moreover, the respondents were also in the favor of traditional roles of men and women such as men as head of household, breadwinning task, preference of men over women in jobs due to women fertility, and girls obeying their father's wished before marriage, and in case of economic well-being of her husband the women should not work. This indicates that the patriarchal values of culture are still dominant in Quetta.

The findings of the study suggest that there was no evidence of lack of awareness about own rights which restricts the decision-making authority of females at family setting, as most of the respondents especially females were literate. The finding of the study suggests that the females who are empowered can make their own life choices, and they are not dependent upon other to take decisions for them.

Suggestions

Based on these conclusions, the practitioner should consider that if possible, the researcher in the field can take a female researcher, with whom the female respondents of the study will be more comfortable. To better understand the implication of these results, future studies could use larger sample size to obtain more accurate results from other institutions and local population. Similarly, instead of just questionnaire semi structured interviews could be used for this kind of research because they give more depth to the findings and it will provide information about the respondent's challenges in Quetta.

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