

## **Challenges faced by the Female College Teachers of a Private Sector College in Socialization of their Children**

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### **Abstract**

*Female working women face various challenges in their attempt to continue their jobs in public and private sector organizations of Pakistan. These include Personal and Professional life balance, harassment, heavy work load, burnout, reduced mother-child interactions and many others. Current study has been conducted with an aim to investigate the challenges faced by the female college teachers of a public sector college in socialization of their children in Quetta, Pakistan. This study being qualitative in nature conducted semi-structured interviews of six participants through semi-structured interview protocols. The data revealed that female college teachers were mainly facing seven challenges. These were the heavy work load, mother-child fewer interactions, weak mother child bond and enhanced children screen time. These challenges require immediate intervention by the college policy makers and college administration at various levels for gender equity.*

**Keywords:**, challenges, children, enhanced child's screen time, heavy workload, socialization, weak mother-child bond, Working women

### **Introduction**

Almost half of Pakistan's population is consisting of females (Statistics Times, 2021). Regardless of the presence of this human resource, Pakistan lies at the bottom of the Gender parity Index since female's representation in the public and private sector is very low (Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Government of Pakistan,

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[MOPDSI, GOP], 2022). To overcome this huge gap, females are consistently joining the public and private sector in Pakistan and contributing to the financial well-being of their families (MOPDSI, GOP, 2022). In this context, they have to face various challenges. Particularly, in a society where female are not part of the mainstream workforce and they are supposed to fulfill household responsibilities, taking and performing jobs becomes difficult. Above this, the societal non-acceptance makes it far more difficult to pursue a career along with the responsibility of childcare care. (Secondary Education Department, Government of Balochistan [SED, GOB], 2020).

### **Rationale**

The challenges faced by the working women include the personal and professional work life balance, heavy work load, harassment, burn out, socialization of their children, safety and dignity challenge, male ego, discrimination and so on (Thakur, 2018; Prabha, 2019). Amongst all the above challenges socialization of the children of working women is severe and can be a hindering factor in assimilation of females into the market force. Since, Education is the top priority of the women in Balochistan, it becomes a necessity to investigate the challenges faced by the working women in socialization of their children.

### **Literature Review**

Research from around the globe have highlighted the nature of challenges faced by the working women and their intensity. Jomoad et al., (2021) in research “Teachers’ workload in relation to burnout and work performance” have cited that teachers face lot of challenges during their service since they have to utilize their household time to design assessment tasks, lesson planning and other co-curricular activities. OFSTED (2019) stated the same as

*Teachers spend less than a half of their time on teaching, while lesson planning, marking and administrative tasks take up a large part of their non-teaching time. Many respondents in both sectors do not have enough time to do the important aspects of their job. This is why they work in their free time: evenings, weekends or annual leave (P.6).*

*The above said challenges have a lot of causes. OFSTED (2019) have explained these causes which are themselves challenges as well as, The main causes of heavy workload are: the volume of administrative tasks, the volume of marking, staff shortages, lack of support from*

*external specialist agencies (such as for special educational needs and disabilities..., or behaviour), challenging behaviour of pupils, changes to external examinations, frequently changing government policies and regulations, and in some cases, lack of skills or training (P.6).*

“Workload refers to the amount of work one person has to do in order to complete his task” (Thakur, 2018). Heavy work load itself is a challenge in personal and professional life balance and it causes many other challenges. Burnout is one amongst these results of heavy work load. It is explained by Maslach, Jackson and Leiter (1996) as “When workload exceeds and person find himself helpless to deal with workload, job burnout develops. Burn out is characterized by three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment”.

Thakur (2018) described that teachers are much more vulnerable to the burnout since they have lot of interaction with the school administration, with parents, with students and with their own family members. Jomoad et. al, (2021) is of the view that heavy work-load causes monotony in teachers and negatively influences their performance. It is further sustained that heavy work-load not only disturbs teachers healthy learning and teaching but also kills their creativity. On one hand when teachers are fully occupied with the fulfilment of their professional tasks, they cannot enjoy their personal life, fully. In doing so, they are unable to provide time to their children for their holistic development. Even if, they spare sometime, their heavy work-load has already disturbed their emotional and mental health so, they cannot fully socialize with their children and cannot bestow the effective care which their children deserve.

Sevilla and Smith (2020) extends the heavy work load’s effects and share that “Parents’ mental health and emotional well-being shape the care they provide”. This is worrying since teachers are parents as well and their mental and emotional health gets disturbed due to the heavy work-load of their job. When working mother is pre-occupied with their job responsibilities and is disturbed mentally, this situation can lead to a lot of developmental issues in the children of such mothers. Lubber and Ultee (2009) are of the view that parents has a huge impact on their children education and religion. Chandio and Ali (2019) elaborated it as,

*Primary socialization starts with the early learning that inculcates the moral support, the accomplishment of the basic needs, social awareness, and degree of enlightenment and the maturity of a child within the close associates as family and peer groups. It allows the recognition of a sound personality to emerge via a healthy growth of children in the sphere of biological, psychological, emotional and economic aspects and it socializes a generation to cultivate through education, ethical values, positive attitude, confidence, good health, and material welfare.*

Zolten and Long (2006) expressed the same as “When parents communicate effectively with their children, they are showing them respect. Children then begin to feel that they are heard and understood by their parents, which is a boost to self-esteem (P.1).” Grimm et al., (2017) has emphasized on this from the sports’ performance as “Parent-child communication is integral to the acquisition of positive developmental outcomes from sport (P.1)” since they believe that such communications take place “before, during, and after children’s competitions (P.3)’.

Knight and Holt (2014) further rationalized it as “Children report that they want their parents to communicate their goals, comment on effort and attitude, provide practical advice, be encouraging, and to match nonverbal behavior with verbal comments (P.5)” and “when parents and children communicated their goals effectively, children reported having better experiences in sport, as indicated by higher self-reported enjoyment and success (P.5)”. Demaray and Malecki, (2002) highlighted it as “researchers established that problems of communication within the family result in higher probability of behavioral problems at school”. Effective parent-child communication is a must for child’s holistic development. Conversely, when the parents do not have enough time to spend with their children, it weakens the child-parent or child-mother bond. Moreover, it has adverse effects on the communication between them, leading to a lot of socialization, academic, mental and health issues in the children.

Rider, (2019) had shed light on such issues as “On the other hand, communication between parents and children that is ineffective or negative can lead children to believe that they are unimportant, unheard, or misunderstood. Such children may also come to see their parents as unhelpful and untrustworthy (P.1).” Atienzo et al., (2009) have articulated it as “many

studies have established that poor parent–adolescent communication is associated with increased risky sexual behaviour (P.110)”.

Sometimes, parents, due to their busy schedule, put their children on the screen which causes Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), obesity and sedentary behaviour in children. Lord et al. (2020) in their research have explained ASD and its prevalence as,

*Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a type of neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by persistent deficits in social communication and interaction and stereotyped or repetitive patterns of behavior, interests or activities. The prevalence of autism is increasing yearly, and the latest report indicates that the prevalence of autism is 1/54 individuals.*

Simultaneously, obesity in children provides foundation to multitude challenges. Water et al. (2013), has provided insights in this matter as under,

*“escalating rates of childhood obesity and evidence establishing the links with a number of serious metabolic, physical, social, and psychological consequences. These consequences include increased risk of developing cardiovascular dysfunction, type diabetes, pulmonary, hepatic, renal, and musculoskeletal complications, reduced health-related quality of life, stigmatization, teasing, and unhealthy behaviours” (P.1).*

All the above challenges directly impact the mothers in Pakistani community since mothers are considered to be the care-providers to the children and they are held responsible for the holistic development of their children. In such circumstances when females have just begun their journey towards the work-force fusion, such socialization challenges may impede their success. It makes the exploration of challenges faced by the female college teachers in socialization of their children a central point.

### **Research Methodology**

This study was qualitative in nature to gain in-depth insights into the phenomenon and contextualize the study (Glesne, 2006). Moreover, the provision of flexibility in terms of tools, data collection processes, research participants and research site modification to facilitate the entire research keeping in view the changing ground realities (Cresswell, 2014). Among the vast field of qualitative research, exploratory case study method was

employed to carry out this research. It is explained by Scholz and Tietje (2002) as,

Exploratory case studies help to gain insights into the structure of a phenomenon in order to develop hypotheses, models, or theories. An exploratory study very much resembles a pilot study; the research design and data collection methods usually are not specified in advance. (p. 4).

The research site was a public sector girls' college in Quetta, City. It was chosen since it has fulfilled the criteria set by the researcher, possessing 12 female college teachers, easy access and volunteer participation of female college teachers. Six female college teachers were selected through purposive sampling. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews of 40-45 minutes which was audio recorded. Semi-structured interview protocol was prepared for the semi-structured interview.

### **Data analysis**

Data was analyzed through the thematic analysis (Mata, 2015) following the six steps after transcribing the data.

1. Familiarization with the data.
2. Coding the data.
3. Generation of initial themes.
4. Reviewing the themes.
5. Naming and defining the themes.
6. Report writing.

### **Findings**

Various challenges were being faced by the female college teachers to socialize their children. These are as under.

#### ***1. Heavy work load***

Research participants shared that they were facing the challenge of heavy workload to fulfill their official responsibilities. In doing so, they have to spare their home time, leaving them and their children suffer. When they were inquired about their job responsibilities, they responded that sports events, college admission test preparation, administrative tasks, meetings, purchases, and other extracurricular activities other than their teaching assignments. When they were asked why they didn't complete their tasks at the college, they responded that it is impossible due to teaching load. Therefore, they have to complete these tasks at their homes. On the question that how they balance

their personal and professional life, they responded that sometimes, it is very upsetting since they have to do household chores along with the fulfillment of their official commitments.

## **2. *Reduced Mother-Child Time***

The second biggest challenge was the reduced mother-child time due to their official responsibilities and household chores. They collectively shared that the time, they spend with their children is insufficient. When they reach back from the college, they feel exhausted so they take a nap or cook meal for the children. In doing so, they cannot spend quality time with their children. One of the research participants shared, “Once I get back to home, I try hard to spend fun time with him [*child*] but I think it's not sufficient. Most of the time I remain busy in-house chores (Salma)”. Another participant shared, “We usually sit together for dinner time. I sometimes can't even pay attention to their issues if any as my next day planning is usually running in my mind. (Kashifa)”.

Even some of the participant's children were taken care by the immediate family members. One of the participants shared “My only child, who is very small is taken care by his grandmother while I am on work (Salma)”. Significant to mention that some participants felt down due to the hectic life style “I often regret that I am unable to give proper time to my own children due to my job (Shakira)”.

Reduced mother-child was the second challenge faced by the participants in socialization of their children.

## **3. *Weak mother-child bond.***

The third biggest challenge in the socialization of the children of the participants was the weak mother-child bond. Since mothers were unable to spend sufficient time with their children so there was not a strong mother-child bond. Comparing the mother-child bond with the other mothers, one participant shared “I feel they [*nephews of the participant*] are very close to their mother as my sister is a housewife. I always feel that the bond which children should have with their mother is missing in my case (Damini)”.

Sometimes participants have observed this bond with the immediate caregiver of the family. One participant shared it as “Oh, my daughter who is ten years old is very close with my sister in law, because she spends most of her time with her aunty (Shakira)”. In this connection the same participant had some feeling of guilt as she shared “I personally love that my sister takes

care of my daughter in my absence but deep down in my heart I have a guilt that due to my work I don't share the same bond with my daughter. (Shakira).” One participant whose children were teenager shared her experience as “My kids are teenagers now. Although I was not working when they were small. But since I am working, I think our bonding is not as strong now as it was earlier (Kashifa).”

#### **4. Increased screen time**

The fourth challenge shared by the research participant was the increased screen time of their children which was hindering their socialization. It was due to the fact that mother do not have enough time to spend with them since they have to complete their official tasks. One of the participants shared it as “My children spend a lot of time in watching TV instead of interacting with their cousins and other family members (Kashifa)”. Interestingly, the children who were taken care by the immediate family member were also on screen. This is evident from the response of one of the participants “My mother-in-law takes good care of my child. But sometimes she turns on tv, watches news and dramas while my child is there with her. She let her watch cartoons as well (Salma)”. Besides some efforts to reduce the children screen time to zero, they could not ensure it. One of the participants shared her experience as “My children watch poems and videos on their uncle’s mobile phone, I do not want this...I have strictly restricted it but could not brought it to the zero (Aqeela).”

This increased screen time was a common challenge.

#### **Discussion**

The study findings have pointed towards the significance of mother role in the holistic development of a child including socialization. Normally, if a mother starts working, an immediate family member began taking care of the child in the mother’s absence. However, it cannot replace the mother’s role since a child receives half of the genes from mother and requires mother’s full attention and care to develop socially, mentally, physically, emotionally and academically.

Mothers proper care and attention lays the ample foundation for a child’s overall well-being. It is because children initiate to develop strong mother-child bond as mother spends more time with the child and starts to communicate the issues, challenges and fears with the mother. In doing so, a child feels connected, being heard and develops strong self-esteem. The child



also begins to trust. Thus, the child stays away from the negative feelings such as use of drugs, shyness, cowardness and boredom. Li and Guo, (2021) conclude after their research on children that “children demonstrate positive emotions when parents spend time with them, and increasing that time is the key to improving children's well-being. (p.13)”.

In Pakistani society mothers are considered the sole care providers to their children whereas fathers are given the role of bread winner. In such a scenario, due to the official and household commitments of a mother, child's overall well-being endangers. Less mother child time means weak mother child bond and consequently weak socialization of a child. This issue demands serious intervention from the College, Technical and Higher Education Department.

Another significant aspect which findings of current study has brought into consideration is the mental and emotional well-being of teachers. Burnout not only negatively influences teacher's performance but also disbalances their personal and professional life. In such circumstances, teachers' children suffer whether it is their social growth or emotional, mental and academic well-being (Jomud et al. 2021). The most critical dimension of the matter is that mental and psychological well-being is not the center focus of private and public sector in Pakistan since it is assumed that all employees are doing great in their personal and professional life. But, findings of the study indicate the existence of minor burnout issue in public sector college in Quetta, Balochistan (Thakur, 2018). Furthermore, it also has adverse impact on the female college students as well.

Researches have indicated continuously that health and well-being of parents is reflected through their parenting style (Foundation, 2022). It means “Parents' mental health and emotional well-being shape the care they provide (Sevilla & Smith 2020, p.3)” and Morales and Guerra (2006) have mentioned that there is “a correlation between cumulative stress experienced by parents and the lower academic achievement of children”. Even existence of minor stress has its own consequences. In current study the participants feelings of guilt and regret are a sign of mild stress which means that stress exists in public sector female college, Quetta, Pakistan. Surely, it is not only influencing the teachers' children's socialization but academic performance of the students as well. This is something to be taken care by the policy makers of Colleges, Technical and Higher Education Department.

In the same connection, enhanced screen time of the teachers' children is alarming due to the fact that it causes obesity, sedentary behaviour and Autism Spectrum Behaviour (ASD) in children. According to a research carried out on the children by the Dong et al., (2021) exhibits the findings that enhanced screen time is directly linked with ASD. Such children not only develop behavioral challenges but also lag behind to develop communication skills. On top, obesity enhances the parental stress in the parents. In such situations, mothers suffer a lot since they are responsible for children care in Pakistani society.

Perhaps, resolving the above challenges faced by the female college teachers in socialization of their children may be a step forward to remove the hurdle in the process of gender equity and equality in Pakistan.

### **Suggestions**

1. Policy maker of Colleges, Technical and higher Education Department shall develop an appropriate policy regarding the work load distribution in the colleges.
2. Colleges, Technical and higher Education Department shall hire counsellors to properly counsel the college teachers to ensure their mental and social well-being.
3. Colleges, Technical and higher Education Department shall establish a child care center at each college so as to facilitate the female college teachers to provide care to their children.
4. Colleges, Technical and higher Education Department shall organize awareness sessions for the college teachers on effective parenting and the ways to balance personal and professional life.

### **Limitations**

1. Finding of the current study being cannot be generalized due to its' qualitative nature.
2. Only Semi-structure Interview was used as a tool to collect data. No other data collection tools as documents and artifact analysis and working women children observation were made due to the scarcity of time.
3. The researcher has tried level best to stay un-biased during the entire process of data analysis and data reporting. However, the personal

perceptions, experiences, might have polluted the data analysis and data reporting process.

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