

## **Gender Discrimination: A case Study of District Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

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### **Abstract:**

*Gender discrimination is an inherited practice strictly followed across the Khattak community in Karak. Predominantly inhabited by Pashtun population, people of this area, share many characteristics with the rest of the Pashtun society. Social structure of the area is strictly fashioned along rigid lines of Pashtunwali and Deobandi sect of Islam. Operating independently these two codes of life overlap each other in many aspects and determine specific position/sphere of influence for both the genders. Pursuit of their discrete roles assigned by these two codes is strictly observed by both genders in Khattaks' community. Deviation is not only discouraged but often leads to social defamation particularly for women. Hence, the objective of the study is to investigate the status of women in Pashtun society, with a particular focus on the socio-cultural status of women in district Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, i.e. north-western province of Pakistan. The study applied exploratory anthropological approach through qualitative interviews and participant observation to achieve the objective of the study. The results of the study shows that life of the women in district Karak is marked by multiple intersectional and gender-specific vulnerabilities and impediments such as women access to education, health facilities, economic resources, decision making process, societal representation and socio-cultural activities. The women of district Karak are suffering from malnutrition and their vulnerabilities to violence and oppression at the hand of both men and women are further key research areas to be explored.*

**Key words:** Gender, discrimination, Khattak, community, Karak.