

Women in the Male Chauvinistic Society: A Sociological Study of District Faisalabad, Punjab (Pakistan)

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Abstract

There is a great hue and cry about the status of women in the male chauvinistic societies particularly in the Muslim societies around the globe. In most of the cases, the literature history presented women as the victim of social injustice, imprisoned in the chains of culture and religion, experiencing political transgression, and social deprivation. The present study investigated the position of women in the male chauvinistic society of district Faisalabad. The investigation was executed in the most vulnerable tehsil (Samundri) of the mentioned district. Furthermore, four union councils were selected in the said tehsil, and fifty respondents were picked up and thoroughly interviewed from each gender group that summed up into two hundred respondents in total. The findings of this research study indicated that 62.0% females and 55.0 % males were agreed that the condition of women was good in the society. Moreover, 61.0% females and 53.0% males were of the view that women should participate in the economic spheres of the household activities. It was revealed by 48.0% females and 44.0 % males that women could play their role in the development of the country. Lastly, 46.0% female and 54.0% male respondents interpreted that male chauvinism has decreased in the society that is permitting ladies to enjoy considerably equal rights in comparison to men. This study concluded that male chauvinism is decreasing very rapidly and would become a past story soon.

Keywords: male chauvinism, society, gender, discrimination and social injustice, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan

1. Introduction:

Patriarchy is a system in which men command on a significant position in important spheres of life as compared to women. It is not only practiced in the Islamic countries but also in all other important religions and cultures of the world (Carol & Christ, 2013). Due to the propaganda of mass media and feminist movements, it has been assumed that males are responsible for all the social injustices that women are experiencing in many parts of the world. Where, the undue domination of males over the female folk in the social, educational, political and religious spheres is characterized as male chauvinism and the societies which practice this trend are regarded as male chauvinistic societies (Peter, 2006). The condition of women is getting better as awareness is increasing through the all-pervasive channels of mass media particularly in the developed as well as in the developing and under-developed countries around the globe. At the global level, if we discuss the condition of women, particularly, in the United States of America, it is improving with the rise of science and technology. In the US, women have made dramatic economic progress, especially since the 1960s. Because of several indicators, women have experienced important gains in nearly two decades that the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) has reported. For example, women are more likely than men to be employed in managerial or professional jobs and to have health insurance coverage (Heidiet. al, 2006). In the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries, considerable progress was made by women in the economically progressive areas dominated by Western culture including North America, Europe, and Australia due to the rise of science and technology. Women, who are living in the developed parts of the world are enjoying equal rights as compared to their male counterparts (Rajan, 2015).

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It is assumed that women who are living in the developing areas subjugated by non-Western culture are leading a life of misery because of the violation of human rights. With the rise of industrialization in the world, a meaningful change has been observed in the condition of women due to the empowerment of women-folk. Women are participating, due to the advancement in science and technology in almost all the spheres of life. In the beginning of the 19th century, the world became conscious that without the proper participation of women, the dream of prosperous future cannot be materialized. It is a universal fact that education has played a vital role in the improvement of the condition of women in the world. Education is very helpful in the awareness building about one's rights and duties. With the rise of education in the world women have become more conscious about their rightful position in the world, and they have involved themselves in the entrepreneurial activities to obtain self-sufficiency (Cohen, 2006).

The Pakistani society has always been characterized as male-dominated Muslim society in which women are undergoing severe type of brutality and savage behavior of male-folk by the print and electronic media of the world (Lal, 2012). The scenario has been changed with the rise of science and technology and the subsequent interest of the govt. of Pakistan in empowering women folk. The condition of Pakistani women has been improved with respect to social, political, economics, educational and religious perspectives. In the educational institutions of Pakistan, the quantity of women is rising as compared to men. In the job sector women have, now, equal opportunity as well as women quota furthermore, in some of the job advertisements it has been clearly mentioned that women will be encouraged to apply. The literacy rate of women, in the fertile and cherishing soil of Pakistan is rising gradually. A steady growth has been observed in the case of Punjab which has improved its literacy rate by one percent from 60% of the previous years to 61 %. (Mamosa, 2015). There is a direct co-relation between education and chances of employment. The more the education in the female-folk, the more will be the women empowerment. The empowerment of women, consequently, will reduce the rate of human rights violence regarding women. It has been, recently, estimated per Labor Force Statistics (LFS) 2012-2013, only 12.51 million Pakistani females, of the estimated 180 million people, of various ages are in employment of some sort (Mirza, 2014).

Due to the provision of equal opportunities in the job sector women have been enjoying a considerable share in the decision-making process of the domestic spheres, consequently, there has been a considerable decrease in the domestic violence among women. If we glance at the global perspective we will come to know that in Algeria and Morocco in 2003, two-thirds of the women surveyed said that domestic violence was justified in certain cases—for example, when a wife disobeyed her husband in her matrimonial wedlock according to the Qur'an injunctions but forgiveness and compromise was preferred. It has become a custom on the part of the world media owned by the Western media to advertise the religious doctrines of such sort without analyzing their effectiveness of maintaining law and order in the society (UNIFEM 2003, 64).

As far as Pakistan is concerned, women are participating in all the important sectors of life shoulder to shoulder to men. The constitution of Pakistan has given considerable rights to women such as freedom of speech, freedom of marriage and divorce, freedom to get education, freedom to participate in the elections, freedom to caste vote according to their choice, freedom of travelling etc. (Sanchita, 2014).

At the provincial level, the 18th amendment to the Constitution (2010) granted greater autonomy to the provinces in matters related to the advancement of women along with other issues. The illegal customs such as Wann, Karo Kari, Kala Kali, marrying away women with the Holy Quran, and honor killing are strictly crushed in the Pakistani society. It is to be noted that very few cases of honor killing are reported every year in Pakistan by the print and electronic media. With the passage of time this trend has declined to a considerable ratio. If any case related to the persecution of women appear in the media, NGOs starts mourning and highlight the case at the global level to blame Islam that it promotes male chauvinism in the Muslim society. It is due to sheer ignorance because it is only a cultural practice which has been snubbed by Islam (UN, 2013).

Pakistan has also committed itself to “pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women”. It is, therefore, obliged to remove “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made based on sex which has the purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women... based on equality between men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms” (UN, 2011: 19).

It is the beauty of this so-called male dominated society of Pakistan where women are regarded as mothers, sisters, wives, daughters unlike the western societies where women have become mere a play thing in the hands of the society.

If we analyze the condition of women in Pakistan, we come to know that there are overall 228 women in the Senate, National and Provincial assemblies of Pakistan. It shows the political consciousness in women regarding the preservation of their rights in the so called male chauvinistic society. There is no society which can be regarded as ideal in the world. The rights of women are even snubbed in the civilized societies of the modern world (Maliha, 2013).

Information technology, which has been supported by our present regime for the economic uplift of our country, has the potential to improve the status of women as this is a kind of technology that is making it easier for women to participate in almost all the important sectors of life. (Hassan, 2009).

2. Importance of this study:

The present study is very important in making the world realize that the condition of women is getting better with the change of time. The spread of education has invoked a new enthusiastic spirit in the minds of the people to identify their proper place in the society. The rapid progress in the field of science and technology has changed the scenario. It has been a custom to pin point a case violating the basic rights of a woman and hatch a convincing propaganda by the utilization of print and electronic media all over the world to create sensation and to increase rating. Now, it is high time for Media that it should also promote the positive and right things happening in the society in an unbiased way. Media emphasize only in promoting negativity attached with social issues. Ideal societies are only present in the political works of Plato (Greek Philosopher), Aristotle, and Karl Marx. Most of the studies on status of women ignores the cultural and religious perspectives and the results are over generalized.

3. Methodology:

It was a cross sectional quantitative research study and the research area of the present study was district Faisalabad. District Faisalabad is consisted in six tehsils. At the 1st stage, one tehsil out of six (Samundri) was selected randomly. At the 2nd stage, four union councils out of 28 were selected randomly. Each Union council is comprised in different numbers of villages and at the 3rd stage, from each Union Council two villages were randomly selected. At the 4th stage, from each village twenty-five respondents were selected randomly to make an overall sample of 200 respondents and an interview schedule was used for data collection which was pre-tested. The respondents were selected with the help of voter lists available from the Union Council office. The collected data were analyzed by using SPSS software.

4. Results and Discussion:

In this quantitative study, comparative approach has been extensively utilized to access the problem from both angles. To mitigate the research bias, the questionnaire was administered on males as well as on females. The responses of the respondents have been compared so that we can reach at valid and realistic conclusions.

Table #1: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to their perception regarding status and role of women in the society.

Variables		Strongly agree		Agree		Indifferent		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Perception about the condition of women in society	Male	10	10.0	55	55.0	23	23.0	11	11.0	1	1.0
	Female	7	7.0	62	62.0	21	21.0	7	7.0	3	3.0
Educated women are beneficial for the society	Male	52	52.0	31	31.0	2	2.0	9	9.0	6	6.0
	Female	70	70.0	11	11.0	3	3.0	1	1.0	15	15.0
Women can play their role in the development of the country	Male	44	44.0	35	35.0	7	7.0	7	7.0	7	7.0
	Female	48	48.0	32	32.0	1	1.0	3	3.0	16	16.0
Perception of the respondents about the gender equality in the society	Male	30	30.0	32	32.0	7	7.0	24	24.0	7	7.0
	Female	37	37.0	37	37.0	3	3.0	12	12.0	11	11.0
Perception how much do they agree that women should participate in the economic spheres of the household	Male	27	27.0	53	53.0	11	11.0	9	9.0	0	0.0
	Female	28	28.0	61	61.0	9	9.0	2	2.0	0	0.0
Women's capability to hold positions of power	Male	12	12.0	52	52.0	10	10.0	22	22.0	4	4.0
	Female	25	25.0	50	50.0	5	5.0	8	8.0	12	12.0

Data depicts that 55% males and amazingly 62% females were of the view that the condition of women is getting better in the society. Obvious reason of this improved condition of women is due to the social, political and religious awareness. Pakistan was ranked 134th out of 135 countries among the most derogatory places for women to live in 2012 (World Economic Forum, 2012: 9). Later, the report of United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has ranked Pakistan at 123th out of 148 countries in the 2012 Gender Inequality Index in 2013 (GII) (UNDP, 2013). The recent findings of the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap published in 2016 ranked Pakistan 143th out of 144 countries among the most derogatory places for women to live in (World Economic Forum, 2016). The above-mentioned estimates are showing that the condition of women is going better gradually. Education is the vital force which can produce significant awareness in the both sexes. It is the education which is responsible for the gradual uplift of women from the misery they were plunged in the past. In Pakistan, the education rate in women was 45.8% in 2015 (Pakistan Demographic Profile, 2016). The govt. of Pakistan is very concerned about the education of her masses. Free books, free uniform, no tuition fee, and in some cases the students are facilitated with scholarships are being provided by the government without any gender discrimination. It is a stark reality that educated women play a vital role in the development of a country by participating in different walks of life. The Islamic society of Pakistan is often considered as a male chauvinistic society in the world. Data reveals that 44 % males and 48% females were strongly agreed that women can play their role in the development of the country. Women are playing their active role in the health, education, political and socio-religious institutions of the country. According to Labor Survey of Pakistan (2006-07), 70% of female labor force are engaged in agriculture and its allied fields and play very hard-hitting role like milking, feeding and caring the livestock (Mariam, 2017). Data reveals that: 32% males and 37% females are of the view that there must be gender equality. As we understand that Islam is the religion of the people who live in Pakistan and the people are of the view that there is no difference between the sexes except in some of the spheres ascertained by the cultural norms. Men and women have different spheres of life and they discharge their respective duties in their respective spheres. In Islam, there is absolutely no difference between men and women as far as their relationship to Allah is concerned, as both are promised the same reward for good conduct and the same punishment for evil conduct (Abdur-Rahman, 2017). Quran says about gender equality that: "And for women are rights over men like those of men over women." [Noble Quran 2:228] and "For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast, for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise, for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward." [Noble Quran 33:35]. The above-mentioned verses of the Holy Quran indicate that there are no any differences between the sexes. The cultural practices are responsible for the discrimination. Islam is the only religion in the world which has bestowed rights to women as compared to other religions of the world. Data highlights that 52% males and 50% females were of the view that women can hold positions of power. The respondents were of the view that women can become politicians, bureaucrats, and technocrats etc. to provide dynamic and dedicated leadership to strengthen the position of their country in the world.

Table # 2: Frequency distribution of the respondents about the treatment they received from males.

Variables		Fairly well		Well		Indifferent		Not Well		Very Bad	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Perception of respondents about the treatment they received from the male figures of their family	Females	48	56.5	33	38.8	3	3.6	0	0.0	1	1.2

Data exposes that 56.5 % of females responded that that they received considerably fairly good treatment from the males of their family (Table 4). We all are very well aware that it is the responsibility of the male members of the family to provide all the facilities of life without considering it as a burden.

The brothers, fathers, and husband are often seen providing them pick and drop service, running errands for them and vacating seats in the public transports in reverence, and much more which is not practiced in the cultured West. It is to be noted that the quantity of women is rising gradually in the colleges and universities without any discrimination. The families are more concerned about the education of girls because they are of the view that educated women can provide better socialization as compared to the illiterate women.

The West takes all these above-mentioned things as the curtailment of the freedom of women due to the sheer ignorance of the scholars about the religio- cultural background of the society. They lack the insight of the mores, folkways and values of the society and they start to hatch propaganda of male chauvinism. It is the religious duty of males to provide all the basic facilities to women happily without discrimination.

Table #3: Frequency distribution of the respondents about the treatment they received from males.

Variables		Yes		No	
		F	%	F	%
Perception of Females About Males as they Grew up at the Same Place with a Male	Females	85	85.0	15	15.0

Data reveals that 85% women believed they grew up with males in the family (Table 3). They claimed that they were provided similar facilities as were enjoyed by their brothers and cousins such as education, medical care, and wholesome food. It is not a matter of great astonishment that women are more cared in this so called male chauvinistic society of the Muslims. There is no compulsion for women to get education, participate in the business activities, and pursue the career they like particularly in the urban areas and generally in the rural areas of Pakistan (Sabeen, 2012). The Western media claims that women are suppressed and inferior being in the Islamic society. They claim that the segregation of sexes in the Islamic society is an unshakeable proof of women's emancipation. Such misunderstandings are largely due to naive and simplistic attempts to transpose a western set of norms and values onto women with a very different history and culture. As we all know that Islam is obviously against the extra-marital relations of both the sexes and Islam does not like homosexuality and lesbianism as practiced by the Western society. The West wants to destroy the family system in the Islamic world by propagating that women are imprisoned in the four walls of the house (Aziz, 2000).

Table # 4: Frequency distribution of the respondents that how much do they agree about gender equality.

Variables		To a great extent		To some extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Perception of respondents about equal rights	Males	23	23.0	58	58.0	19	19.0
	Females	15	15.0	68	68.0	17	17.0

Data indicates that 58% males and 68% females believe women are enjoying equal rights in the society as compared to men- folk. As we know that Pakistani society is an Islamic society, and Islam allows considerably equal rights to women in their respective spheres of lives. If we look at the participation of women in the political field we will come to know that women make up 20.29 % (69 seats) representation in the National Assembly, (Abdul-Razzaq, 2014), 17 % (17 seats), 20.5 % (76 seats), 18.5% (31 seats), 17. 7% (22 seats) and 18.5 % (seats) are reserved in the Senate, Punjab Assembly, Sindh Assembly, KPK Assembly and Baluchistan Assembly respectively (Maliha, 2013). The ratio of women in the educational sector is rising day by day. There are 42% females and 58% males are in the educational institutions of Pakistan (Nasir Amin, 2011-2012). In fact, women are participating in all the important sectors of life in Pakistan.

Table # 5: Frequency distribution of the respondents about their perception of the status of male chauvinism in the society.

Variables		Increased		Decreased		Remained the same	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Perception about the Male Chauvinism	Males	23	23.0	54	54.0	23	23.0
	Females	29	29.0	46	46.0	25	25.0

Data in the above-mentioned table provides a clear perception of the respondents about the chauvinistic attitude in the society. 54% males and 46% females were of the view that male chauvinism has decreased in the society. There are multiple factors responsible for this considerable decrease such as education, awareness generated by mass media, and the policies of the govt. regarding the rights of women. The constitution of Pakistan says that "all citizens are equal in the eyes of law". It is the major reason that women are seen unleashing their potential capabilities in all walks of life. It is a glaring sign that male chauvinism is no more existing in the society (Hashim, 2017). Women are protected more as compared to men in this so called male chauvinistic society. The govt. of Pakistan has provided a considerable legal protection to women by passing several bills of protection.

5. Conclusion:

Male chauvinism, in the 20th century, has become a thing of the past. Now, women are audaciously participating in all walks of life with enthusiasm and determination. They are moving on and on and on without any discrimination. Education has given a new confidence to women-folk. They have realized their actual place in the society. The govt. of Pakistan is providing facilities to women by incorporating them in the job sectors. It is hoped that with the passage of time women will play a more significant role in the development of the country by unleashing their potential. It is the ethical duty of mass media to realize its responsibility to depict women in true colors. Media should avoid presenting women as the eternal victim of social, cultural and religious victim just to gain rating.

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