

FAMILY STRUCTURAL NORMS, LEADING TO GENDER DISPARITY AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

***DR. SAQIB SHAHZAD, *DR. RIASAT ALI, **DR. MUHAMMAD AZAM, ***RASHID KHAN**

*Assistant Professor, IER, University of Science & Technology, Bannu - Pakistan

**Assistant Professor of Economics, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan - Pakistan

***M. Phil. Scholar, University of Science and Technology, Bannu - Pakistan

ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the "Family Structural Norms Leading to Gender Disparity at University Level. The broad objectives of the study were: to gain the views of university female students about family structural norms leading to gender disparity, to compare the views of the university students from urban and rural areas about family structural norms leading to gender disparity and to give suggestions to minimize the gender gap particularly at University level. The study was delimited to only the public sector universities in North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Questionnaire was the tool of data collection. The results show that insufficient institutions, early marriages and preference of male child over female are the major causes of gender disparity. This gage can be lessened by strengthening the educational facilities and creating the awareness among masses generally and particularly in females.

INTRODUCTION

The empowerment of women is recognized as the central issue for determining the status of women. Among the socially disadvantaged groups, women are the victims of gender discrimination and deprivation. Women, especially rural women continue to be exposed to inhuman conditions and are victims of multiple forms of discrimination, domestic violence, conflict as well as deprivation. Women's access is still denied to information technology, health education and at all levels of decision making. Despite progress in implementing women's empowerment and gender equality programs in national plans, there was still a long way to go to ensure full gender equality. Any development efforts to be sustainable should pursue policies which would be helpful in eradication such discrimination and deprivation based on gender as inherent inequalities with in a family would fail to produce proper development of the society and hence of the country as a whole (Chakrabarti, 2001).

Patriarchal values, embedded in Pakistani society, and in its local traditions and cultures pre-determine the social value of gender. Low level of resource investment in women by the family and the state causes gender disparity. It provides them with greater opportunity and choice to improve their

lives and that of their families. Education is the key to overcoming oppressive custom and traditions that have negated the needs of girls and women. Human resource development is only possible if males and females of the country are highly educated and skilled (Khan, 2007).

Crapo (2000) stated that society is an organization of people who share a common territory, govern them and co-operate to secure the survival of the group. Society is the group of people who conceive of themselves as distinct from other groups and who are connected together through communicational ties, common customs and traditions, and institutions such as politics, law and economics.

Mehdi (2007) explained Socio-Cultural Norms of Pakistan that Pakistan consists of four provinces, the federal capital area and the federally administered tribal areas (FATA). The total population of the country, according to the provincial results of the 1998 Population Census, is 130.6 million, of which 55.6 percent is in the Punjab, 23 percent in Sind, 13.4 percent in North Western Frontier Province (NWFP), 5 percent in Baluchistan, 2.4 percent in FATA and 0.6 percent in Islamabad. About 67.5 percent of Pakistan's population is rural and 32.5 percent urban. The society of Pakistan comprises

numerous diverse cultures and ethnic groups from the Punjabis and Sindhis in the east to the tribal cultures of the Baloch and Pashtun, as well as the ancient Dardic people inhabiting its North.

Afridi (2003) described the Socio-Culture Norms of North West Frontier Province as that respect for women is also evident from the fact that she is not interfered with in case of tribal hostilities, blood feuds, village affrays or brawls. Pakhtun women do not observe the customary purdah but they do wear Burqa while paying visits to cities or distant places beyond their locality. In their outdoor functions, they however, cover the face and body with a Chaddar or Dopatta.

Yasmin (2005) describes about the Women Rights in Pakistan that Women’s rights around the world are an important indicator of understanding global well being. ‘Women’s rights in Pakistan’ is a big question often raised in the west. It is believed that women have no rights or privileges in the male dominated society of Pakistan. Pakistan is known as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Islam is the state religion. The vast majority of the people are Muslims. The Islamic code of life and religion is the ideal to be achieved by Pakistan.

Qureshi and Rarieya (2007) state the Female’s Education in Pakistan as that the constitution of Pakistan (1973) promises equal rights to all citizens repudiates discrimination on the basis of sex alone, and affirms steps to ensure full participation of women in all spheres of life. The constitutional assertion and emphasis on equal rights and opportunities for women was meant to address the traditionally low social status and minimal participation of women in most social sectors. In the years 1949-50 two years after Pakistan’s independence in 1947, overall gross participation rates at primary and secondary levels were low at 16 per cent and 9 per cent respectively.

Haq (2000) describes the constraints to girl’s education that complex and interrelated factors are responsible for the low educational attainment of girls in the region. In some cases, these are country specific but many factors are common to all south Asian countries. Low female participation in the education system is primarily the outcome of two factors: low parental demand for girls schooling; and the public and private sectors supply of educational services that do not respond to the communities’ needs. Traditionally, supply-related factors have received more attention. It was thought that with enough schools, teachers and textbooks,

the education system would produce the desired outcome for girls and boys alike. However it is increasingly becoming apparent that these factors are necessary but not entirely sufficient for ensuring required enrolment and achievements rates. It is thus important to address the constraints related to demand as well supply.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To gain the views of university female students about family structural norms leading to gender disparity.
2. To compare the views of the university students from urban and rural areas about family structural norms leading to gender disparity.
3. To give suggestions to minimize the gender gap particularly at University level

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The major purpose of the study was to study the family Structural Norms, Leading to Gender Disparity at University Level.

METHODOLOGY

The major purpose of the study was to find out Socio-cultural Norms leading to Gender Disparity at university level in NWFP. The study was descriptive type in nature. The following procedure was adopted for the study.

POPULATION

All the female students of public sector universities in the province of NWFP constituted the population of the study.

SAMPLE

Sample of the study consist of 400 female students (200 urban and 200 rural) of four universities. The description of the sample is given below;

University	Females Urban	Females Rural	Total
Peshawar	50	50	100
Gomal D. I. Khan	50	50	100
Kohat	50	50	100
Bannu	50	50	100
Total	200	200	400

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

A questionnaire was developed for the collection of necessary data. The questionnaire was validated through pilot testing before these were administered on the sample.

DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected through administering the questionnaire, validated through pilot testing. For that purpose researcher personally visited the sample universities and obtained responses from the sample respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS

For data analysis, the researcher numbered the filled questionnaires, collected from different Universities, then made the variables as desired by the topic. Universalities, locations, programs and faculties were the variables, which were coded numerically. Data analysis tools such as mean, standard deviation and t-test were used. The level of significant was 0.05.

Strongly Agree	(SA)	1.00 – 1.80
Agree	(A)	1.81 – 2.60
Undecided	(UD)	2.61 – 3.40
Disagree	(DA)	3.41 – 4.20
Strongly Disagree	(SDA)	4.21 – 5.00

Table 1 shows the detail of respondents' views regarding the structural norms vogue in the society. About consultation of females while making decision for higher education, the Mean of the statement is 2.18* and Standard Deviation is 1.18, which ranks between the ranges of 1.81-2.60. So, majority of the respondents are "Agree" with the statement, that "majority of girls are not consulted, while deciding about their higher education." While that of the statement relating to University transport facilities, the Mean value is 2.13* and Standard Deviation is 1.17, which lies between the ranges of 1.81-2.60. Majority of the respondents are "Agree" with the statement that "Pick and Drop facilities are not properly provided by the Universities." And the statement, regarding parents' academic performance of the kid's, the Mean value of the statement is 2.94, and Standard Deviation is 1.38, which lies in between the range of 3.41-4.20. So, great parts of the respondents are "Undecided" with the statement that "Parents do not prefer better academic performance of their sons as compared to

their daughters." Similarly, the statement on females' access to University Education, the Mean value is 2.20* and Standard Deviation is 1.17, which lies in the range of 1.81-2.60. So, the majority of respondents are "Agreed" with the view that "Females have low access to higher education in NWFP." The statement relating to the number of higher education institutes, the Mean value is 2.15* and Standard Deviation is 1.15, which ranks in between the range of 1.81-2.60. So, the respondents are "Agree" with the idea that "there are insufficient Universities in NWFP to promote female education." Sequentially, to the overall conclusion of the table for Structural Norms, the Mean value is 2.32*, and Standard Deviation is 0.69, which lies in the range of 1.81-2.60. From the value it is clear that majority of the respondents are "Agree" with the statements of Structural Norms.

Table 1: Views of respondents on Structural Norms

S. No.	Statement	M	SD
1.	Majority of the girls are not consulted, while deciding about their higher education.	2.18*	1.18
2.	Pick and drop facilities are not properly provided by the universities.	2.13*	1.17
3.	Parents prefer better academic performance of their sons as compare to their daughters.	2.94	1.38
4.	Females have low access to higher education in NWFP.	2.20*	1.17
5.	There are insufficient universities in NWFP to promote female education.	2.15*	1.15
	Over all	2.32*	0.69

Table 2 depicts that the Mean and Standard Deviation for both the Urban and Rural are 2.35, 2.39 and 0.66, 0.71 respectively. While the t value and P value is 0.75 and 0.18 respectively. The P value is greater than 0.05, the level of significance. So, there is no significance difference between urban and rural respondents for Structural Norms concerning Gender Disparity.

Table 2: Comparison of Urban and Rural respondents' views on Structural Norms

Location	N	M	SD	t-value	P
Urban	200	2.35	0.66	0.75	0.18
Rural	200	2.39	0.71		

CONCLUSIONS

In the light of findings of the study, following conclusions were drawn.

1. Maximum respondents were of the view that girls were not consulted while deciding about their higher education.
2. Maximum respondent reported that pick and drop facilities were not properly available to the students.
3. Maximum respondent were of the opinion that parents prefer their sons on daughter in education.
4. Maximum respondent opined that female have low access in higher education.
5. Maximum respondent reported that female higher education institutions were not properly available in NWFP.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of conclusions, the researchers made the following recommendations.

1. It was found in the study that girls were not consulted while deciding about their higher education. It is recommended in order to minimize the gender gap in every field and every walk of life, the rights of decision making and participating should be given to every individual, irrespective of their gender, caste and ethnicity.
2. It was revealed in the study that pick and drop facilities were not properly available to the students. It is recommended that proper transportation facilities should be managed by universities especially for women in order to increase female access rate in higher education.

3. Findings revealed that female have low access to higher education. It is recommended more incentives in the form of scholarships should be awarded to the university female students to increase their access to higher education.
4. The results of the study showed that female higher education institutions were not available in North West Frontier Province. It is recommended that more higher education institutions should be open especially for women in order to reduce the Gender Disparity and to promote the female education in these remote areas.

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