

**CAUSES AND IMPACT OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION ON WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT**Rukhshanda Zarar<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Dr. Naheed Abrar<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Ayesha Gul<sup>3</sup>**Original Article**

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**Abstract**

Gender discrimination is a sensitive and critical issue all over the world. Every woman experiences gender discrimination in her life whether it is a modern or a developing society. In developing countries like Pakistan gender discrimination is more deep rooted in both rural and urban societies. The aim of this study is to find out the causes and impact of gender discrimination against woman in Quetta city. A quantitative research method was used to achieve the objectives of this study. A mixed sample of literate and illiterate, male and female respondents was selected at random and data was collected through questionnaires distributed among the literate groups while the illiterate group was interviewed. The data of this study shows that women face gender discrimination in their entire life. The low education level, cultural pressure, poor socio-economic conditions, religious influence and societal trends and different social behaviors against women are the main causes of gender discrimination. The illiterate group had more favored the gender discrimination. Majority of the respondents want change to end this kind of societal behavior.

**Keywords:** Gender, discrimination, impact, Social development, freedom, women's right, cultural values

**INTRODUCTION**

Gender discrimination is a global issue it is a part of every society and every society has some conflicts and contradictory behaviors which shows the gender discriminatory thoughts. It has been spread in every corner of the world. In the simplest terms discrimination is the unequal treatment of people on the basis of characteristics that

differentiate those people (Pager & Shepherd, 2008). According to Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) gender discrimination was defined as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of

human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field (UN, 2007). Social discrimination is a matter that refers to the factors outside the individual's control as it is associated with the immediate social environment with which an individual gets connected in order to survive in a society. The violation of an individual's rights is illegal and the women discrimination involves the treating women in a less favorably attitude because of the gender difference with them. It can also be termed as community problem as it is concerned to a community of people. Usually the social issues are in the form of conflicts and tensions at some view points and attitudes. In short, the discrimination is the rejection of the desired qualities and rights of an individual (Khalid, 2013).

Women's rights to land, property, food, water and sanitation, as well as work and social security, are intrinsically linked to the right to attain an adequate standard of living. All these rights are guaranteed under international human rights law, including to the right to enjoy these rights on an equal basis with men, without discrimination. Women's access to services, to education and to productive resources is paramount to the realization of the above mentioned rights (UNHR, 2014). A woman can enjoy all the rights and nobody can restrict her. According to national and international constitution woman has freedom to enjoy her life as a man but most of the time society suppress the basic rights due to male dominated society."Unfortunately, Pakistan and Indian societies still run on tribal and feudal system and the majority of the population lives under rural and feudal control. In feudal system, there is no education; no freedom and women are treated like slaves or prisoners in the households making violence against women in these societies very common (Ali, 2008). Discrimination against women gives rise to many consequences such as the

creation of gender gap in education and employment which in turn become causes of gender discrimination as well. These causes and consequences are so linked that even if one of these were eliminated, the other would disappear of its own according. Therefore, world authorities have made inexhaustible efforts to alleviate gender discrimination in the world (Weiss, 2014). However if we study the gender discrimination then there are lots of root causes of gender discrimination such as lack of education, to follow the strict cultural values, male dominated society, and influence of tribal system and to follow the religious practices.

The lack of education and low literacy rate is a major cause of gender discrimination. There is a big difference in the contribution of education between boys and the girls. According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2010, only 62% of the girls get primary education while the primary education is availed by 78% boys of the Quetta city. The secondary education is availed by the 45% of the girls but 68% boys get secondary education. Only 28% of the girls get admission in the intermediate colleges. It is also noticed that the girls in Quetta are not admitted to the schools or if admitted then, their school is very low standard which delivers the low standard studies to the girls on low fee structure. On the other hand, the boys of the same families are admitted in the high standard schools where the fees are also high but the parents are affording that for the sake of the high standard studies of their sons. The lack of education is a major cause of gender discrimination. Uneducated woman is unaware about her rights and never claim for it and she depends on her parents before marriage and on her husband after marriage for all economical expenditures so that's why she has poor socio- economical status which makes his condition more miserable. The early marriage is another reason of gender

discrimination. The girls get to marry without their consent and typical husband doesn't allow her to even discuss about her legal and social rights. Also the young girls, who get married in a very young age, don't know or even realize about their rights which they deserve. The early marriages are also a source of women disability as it doesn't allow a girl to be educated or learned (Fuse, 2010). The lack of education is a major cause of gender discrimination. Uneducated woman is unaware about her rights and never claim for it and she depends on her parents before marriage and on her husband after marriage for all economical expenditures so that's why she has poor socio- economical status which makes his condition more miserable.

The big difference is in the higher education where the girls' admission rate drops to only 3% which is very condemnable for the society as the number of labor force, the female candidates are very smaller in number as compared to the boys. Females do not get higher education but if they get higher education they cannot adopt it as a profession. There can be different reasons parents do not allow to job and they insist for marriage and after marriage females have to fulfill responsibilities of in laws, husband and children and they do not allow her to job or work as an employee. The higher education of girls is very rare in Quetta city because of the number of reasons which stops a girl from getting admission in high school. Despite of the financial problems, there are many other reasons for this reduced number of higher education of girls (Awan, 2012).

Health care discrimination also exists and lots of women face different kind of health issues. In urban areas women can easily access health facilities they can get hospitals and doctors however the rural women have limited resources and they do not avail these facilities and majority population of Pakistan belong to rural areas. According to the recent study, the 81% of the total population of

Quetta is at health risks. Girls are more vulnerable and at higher risk of death with 68% population and 57% of the girls are underweight and 44% mothers do not have the proper diet during the pregnancy. Women have to face challenges due to less care during the antenatal and postnatal period. The safe abortions and safe deliveries through skilled birth attendants and doctors are very rare due to the lack of proper and regular consults and checkups from the doctors (Klapper & Parker, 2011).

There are numerous cases every day in which women have to face deaths during their pregnancy or delivery of the baby due to the insufficient medical facilities. The menstrual cycle disorders are also a very common disease in the girls but the some of the family values and concerns don't allow them to consult with a gynecologist as the family heads are usually males and the mother or girls feels shameful or shy in discussing the problem with them. Also consulting a gynecologist before marriage is considered to be very shameful among the aged ladies because of the conservative thoughts. But this issue leads to very serious issues related to the health of the girls. Many other health facilities are rare in the Quetta city which has posing very adverse effects in the total disease rate of the city. Gender discrimination is also faced by the female patients as the doctors, nurses and the other staff pays more attention to the male patients and female ward always got the second number during the round of a doctor or nurse (Abbas, Hameed & Waheed, 2011).

The major cause of gender discrimination is a cultural societal behavior and male dominated society. As gender discrimination has been a serious issue of the city, the society has become stricter towards the survival of the women and it doesn't allow a woman to spend her life in a most comfortable way and according to her desires. Most of the girls and women are not

allowed to do the job in an office as the presence of male is unavoidable there. So the parents mostly think that the most suitable profession for girls is teaching or medical. This concept of the society cannot be changed at once as the trends are running down from generations to generations. However, Pakistan has got the constitutions and laws related to the women empowerment but the struggle for the rights of women is constant through the years and there is no result evoking from the struggle and sufferings of the women (Sadruddin, 2013).

The conservative mind set of the families include those reasons which are thought to be righteous for women. Most of the families believe that if a girl will get education then she will become independent, disobedient and bold. Also the girls have to do the household chores at the final stage of life so there is no need for the girl's education. Another common concept that is found in the Quetta society is that a woman is a silly and weak creature so she cannot be effective in the decision making and the important issues handling. Pakistan is a Muslim country and Islam gave lots of rights for women but in reality no one follow them. In the Quran accountability for men and women, spiritual equality and responsibility is a unique and well-developed theme. This spiritual equality between men and women is base of equality in all aspects of human life in the world and after world in the sight of Allah (Bukhari & Ramzan 2013). In Islamic point of view man and women are equal and there is no difference between these two creatures of Allah. But due to the lack of religion knowledge people adopt discriminatory behavior except equality.

Rehman and Azam Roomi presents that this deprivation of opportunity is one that is faced by women of all cultures, nations and professions around the globe. Women living in all countries are affected by this plague. Also, a perception exists where women are

supposed to stay in such positions of jobs that are lower than men. Mostly, these jobs are that of teachers, nurses and care takers of elderly people. Other than that, most women are not given enough opportunities to improve. That has not helped women vastly. In fact, women have become poorer due to such stereotypes. The cycle of poverty has come back with full influx due to this (2012).

Gender gap is created by the discrimination that takes place against women in the world. Basically, Gender inequality is the root cause of gender gap. According to a research carried out by Organization for Economic Cooperation (OECD), the equality in gender is not only a requisite for empowerment in terms of economy. It is something that is required by morality. This gender equality is also required by the principles of fairness and equity. It has the impact of many cultural, political and social aspects. Gender empowerment plays an essential role in the personal well-being and happiness of women all over the world. Different aspects of life see different levels of gender discrimination such as in education, employment, household decision making and other essential areas of life (Offer & Schneider, 2011).

It is very important to less gender discrimination a woman should be strong economically so that she can enjoy independently if she has enough money to spend her life she can survive better in a male dominated society. The United Nations has highlighted the attainment of education at all levels possible and without a doubt, it is the most important aspect of an individual's life. This aspect is one that grooms an individual intrinsically. Especially, women are groomed more by this process than anything else. Women seldom get the opportunity to go out and make most of the opportunities that are available to them due to the lack of resources they generally available to them. But education is something that is accessible to women. They can make good use of it, and they can do so by identifying their current knowledge and identifying their existing

needs. Women are at the disadvantage in the fact that they cannot attain jobs of their own stature. That is due to the fact that women do not often get the quality of education that they deserve. They cannot have the jobs that have a good reputation, that pay well and that would help them advance. Due to this, women are unable to participate in politics and other activities that are essential for their own progress (Ramzan, 2011).

The United Nation (UN) practically centralized the concept of gender development as an imperative for the development of the world at large. This mainstreaming concept compelled countries around the globe to introduce initiatives to increase the rights of women. A major role was played by this concept for gender equality in the world. United Nations has always endorsed Gender Empowerment. The initiatives of the United Nations have been taken in respect of several gaps and challenges that it has identified in separate domains of life. The major ways in which gender equality can be created is by developing the self-esteem of women. Research has determined fulfilling employment as one of the ways to raising the self-esteem of women and reducing gender inequality. Here, the factors of giving women access to employment, job quality, sufficient labor policies, creating a learning organization for women, developing an environment in which the needs of the employees reconcile with those of the policies of the organization and the environment of the organization. Other than that, factors pertaining to education and entrepreneurship can reduce gender inequality and enhance women confidence (Varghese, 2011).

The gender discrimination is the major problem in Pakistan and women of Quetta are on the top on the list of victims of the discriminatory behavior. The discrimination of women in the city can be found in almost every aspect of a women life and they cannot avoid or prevent themselves being the victim of the gender based discrimination where the only responsibility of them is that they are related to the gender section which is called Female. Thus it is clearly noticed that the

society of Quetta is not supportive for the rights of women and there is an artificial and invisible division of gender which has laid the basis of discriminatory behavior.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To identify the causes of educational and health Gender discrimination
- To identify the social and economic causes of gender discrimination
- To identify the social and cultural pressure against gender discrimination

#### **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

- There is a significant relationship between educational status of people and gender discrimination
- There is a relationship between income of people and gender discrimination against women
- There is a relationship between cultural background of families and gender discrimination against women

#### **RESEARCH METHODS**

The descriptive research was used for this study and sampling technique was stratified random sampling. For achieving the results of this study data was collected from different ethnic areas of Quetta such as Sariab , Huda, Nawa kili, Hazara town, Alamdar Road and Sirki road to show the representation of different ethnic groups Pashtoon, Baloch, Hazara and settlers (Punjabi, Urdu and Siraiki) . For this study 200 literate and illiterate males and females respondent were chosen to collect the data. Scheduled interviews were conducted from illiterate males and females and questionnaires were filled from literate males and females to know the opinion and behavior about gender discrimination against women. The data was entered and analyzed on SPSS software and Chi Square test was selected to testing the hypotheses of study. For analysis of data statistical method was used. The significance level was 0.05 as p-value higher 0.05 was considered statistically insignificant.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**H: There is a relationship between educational status of people and gender discrimination against women.**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	272.108 <sup>a</sup>	292	.792
Likelihood Ratio	216.313	292	1.000
Linear-by-linear association	.043	1	.835
N of Valid Cases	200		
a. 370 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.			

The chi-square result for testing the relationship between the study participants' educational status and gender discrimination of women shows that the value of Chi-Square was 272.108 and alpha value  $p = .792$ . In the light of the alpha value, the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus there is no relationship between the educational status of the study respondents and gender discrimination against women.

**H: There is a relationship between income of people and gender discrimination against women.**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	316.086 <sup>a</sup>	292	.159
Likelihood Ratio	297.939	292	.393
Linear-by-linear association	3.099	1	.078
N of Valid Cases	200		
a. 370 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .10.			

The chi-square result for testing the relationship between the study participants' income and gender discrimination of women shows that the value of Chi-Square was 316.086 and  $p = .159$ . In the light of the alpha value, the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus there is no relationship between income of the study respondents and gender discrimination against women.

**H: There is a relationship between cultural background of families and gender discrimination against women**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14600.000 <sup>a</sup>	5329	.000
Likelihood Ratio	1655.544	5329	1.000
Linear-by-linear association	199.000	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		
a. 5476 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.			

The chi-square result for testing the relationship between the study participants' cultural background of family and gender discrimination of women shows that the value of Chi-Square was 14600.000 and  $p = .000$ . In the light of the alpha value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus there is a statistically significant relationship between cultural background of the study respondents' family and gender discrimination against women.

### MAJOR FINDINGS

The results of the study indicate presence of gender discrimination against women in Quetta city in the social, health, education and economic spheres. The highest level of the gender discrimination is in the social-behavior sphere. The least level of the gender discrimination is in education and health. In the social sphere, the main manifestation of gender discrimination is a low role of the women participation in family decisions in Quetta and restrictions for women to be alone outside the home. The main social-economic causes of gender discrimination in Quetta are cultural pressure and male-dominated society. Also, the religious person and media have a negative impact on the gender discrimination. Majority 75% females are not aware about their rights even they do not know that to get education and to availing better health facilities are their rights. Thus it is clearly noticed that the society of Quetta is not supportive for the rights of women and there is an artificial and invisible division of gender which has laid the basis of discriminatory behavior. The women are supposed to be in the reproductive role as mothers and the home manager as wives while the men are supposed to be in the productive role of breadwinners and the public dealer. There is low investment in women's human capital and it is associated with the ideology of veil, hijab or pardah. The negative social biasness and the cultural practices have raised the concept of honor linked women's sexuality, restrictions on women's mobility and the gender based discrimination in all aspects of life (Sadruddin, 2013).

As the additional problem is the lack of protection of women against various manifestations of gender discrimination. Majority respondents (85%) admit that male have more preference over female and they feel that daughters are as a burden on the family. The family is usually head by a male

in the form of husband, father, brother or son. Most of the times, the rules and living principles of a family are laid by these male heads so these rules are always in the favor of men in this male dominating society. This is supported by another research that the gender based discrimination is always present in the families and almost every girl is facing this type of discrimination. These male heads have their own fake reasons which they show as a reason of their gender discrimination. The whole life cycle of a women revolve around the male heads and these heads take the advantage of their position in various ways (Iqbal, Afzal & Inayat, 2012).

A large number of daughters in the family are the cause of embarrassment for the family and they have to leave parent's home after marriage but sons are their future and they will look after them in old age. A Significant number of the respondents think that girls should not have the right to get education according to their own interest and they are against to go outside for earning and to get any technical education. It was proved in the study of Hitchman & Fong that high cost of higher education and the comparatively poor potential for girls to earn an income, girls are pushed out of their homes and schools and into marriage; marriage of aged girls has been found to be the main barrier against achieving higher education, promoting gender parity for girls. Higher education support intervention tends to interrupt and prevent untimely and forced marriages (Hitchman & Fong, 2011). The majority of respondents (61%) consider that illiteracy; male dominated society and cultural values are major barriers in women education. Mostly relatives do not support females for higher education.

The study found that majority of respondents (72%) believes that women should have more rights in education and health care. However, in the field of a family and social behavior, they have a more conservative view. Many families do not like consent of female at the marriage time and working women and they do not allow them for work outside the home. They feel this action can be the cause of embarrassment for their

families in society. The Majority of respondents' especially literate males and females feel that a literate woman can better participate in her daily life and it also depends on educational background of family if the members of family are highly educated then they allow women to get higher education. A significant number of the respondents (91%) consider the culture as the reason of illiteracy in women and their social development. Concerning girl's higher education, most of the families do not allow them to attend, preferring to invest in educating boys instead where there is a beneficial output with advancing a boy's education because girls are not allowed to perform certain jobs, so investing in girls is seen a waste of money (Salik & Zhiyong, 2014). Majority of respondents (53%) said that this kind of discriminatory behavior can cause psychological unrest in women. They can involve inferiority complex, feeling of insecurity and the repetition of same behavior one generation to another generation. Majority of respondents (42%) consider that women are psychologically weak compared to men. But literate women do not consider that women are psychologically weak. Most respondents said that gender discrimination is linked with social status of women. There is a different opinion about education between literate and illiterate respondents. Literate males and females favor female's education and think female's education is important for society development. Majority of respondent think that Lower class and less educated people have more discriminatory behavior than high and upper class. They are less biased about their family's women. Majority of respondents think that there should be end of this discriminatory behavior. According to Van de Velde, Bracke and Levecque that it is necessary that well organized policies are established in respect of women rights. These policies would play an essential role in the future progress of women. Initiatives such as increase in attainment of education would bring about a positive social change for women around the globe. In this respect it is necessary that factors pertaining to economy, labour market, and business are improved and a viable room is made for these factors to disseminate information that is reliable and comprehensive (2010).

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate presence of gender discrimination in Quetta city in the social, health, education and economic spheres. The highest level of the gender discrimination is in the social-behavior sphere. The least level of the gender discrimination is in education and health. In the social sphere, the main manifestation of gender discrimination is a low role of the women participation in family decisions in Quetta and restrictions for women to be alone outside the home. The study found that men believe that women should have more rights in education and health care. However, in the field of a family and social behavior, they have a more conservative view. This is common opinion that women weak in planning and decision making are more often in illiterate gender group than in the literate (especially literate women). Illiterate gender groups have opinion that to spend money on women is useless whereas literate gender groups do not think so. Majority of the females are not aware of the rights of women. As the additional problem is the lack of protection of women against various manifestations of gender discrimination. This discriminatory behavior involves women in different type of psychological disorders such as inferiority complex and depression. Women have lack of decision power and they can not express their views with freedom. Mostly women do not favor this type of discriminatory behavior and want to end it. However, there is a big difference between Literate and illiterate males and females point of views.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

*The following recommendations are suggested after completion of study.*

Literacy ratio is very low in female and Government should support female's education and make policies for promotion of female's education and give priority to this issue.

This is very difficult to separate the social and biological factors of gender discrimination but society, Government and different social

organizations should play their role to raise the social status of women in society.

Social, electronic and print media can play better role to change the society to decrease gender discrimination.

Religious personalities should play their role to change the conservative mindset

The data of study shows that majority women unaware about their rights. Women should aware about their rights.

Government should focus technical education for female to improve their economical development.

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