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Gender Discrimination Faced By Men And Women In Punjab: A Cross-Sectional Survey

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Abstract

This study intends to examine the association between gender and causative factors affecting gender discrimination in Punjab. Several women throughout the world live in conditions in which they are deprived of their basic human rights for no other reason than their sex. A cross-sectional survey has been conducted and a sample of 200 men and women has been selected using snowball sampling technique from the district of Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan. A set of variables have been used as the determinants of gender discrimination and a structured questionnaire has been administered. Further, it was pretested from 30 selected participants and the value of Alpha ranged from .709 to .885. Moreover, statistical analysis has been made to conclude the findings. The study findings outlined that there is an association between gender with favor, reason, employment opportunity, health issues, workplace, rights, family setups, and role in the elimination of gender discrimination. Similarly, the study also depicted that gender has significant differences in response to favor, reason, religion, working place, rights, employment opportunity, and health issues.

Keywords: Gender, Discrimination, Family, Workplace, Culture

Introduction

Gender discrimination has been found in several societies around the globe (Tara & Ahsan, 2020; Zakar, Zakar, & Hamid, 2018). It refers to any situation where a person is denied an opportunity or misjudged solely based on his or her sex (Syed & Ali, 2019; Wu, 2019). It has also been argued that any unequal treatment may also be referred to as sex discrimination or sexism (Shah & Khurshid, 2019). Sexism is a belief that one sex is superior to another (Brightman, 2015). As defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO), discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, or preference made based on race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, or social origin has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity and treatment in employment or occupation. Nayler (2003) distinguishes between direct and indirect discrimination. The first form arises if, without being less qualified, certain groups of society are explicitly excluded or disadvantaged by the legal framework due to characteristics such as gender (Singh, Kaur, & Prasad, 2014; Yilmaz, 2014). Indirect discrimination occurs if intrinsically neutral rules or laws negatively affect certain groups, e.g. female workers (Mehrotra & Kapoor, 2009).

It has been revealed that discrimination plays out with networking and preferential treatment within the economic market (Chowbey, 2016). Men typically occupy positions of power within the job economy (Aslam, 2002). Gender inequality can further be understood through the mechanisms of sexism (Alizai, Doneys, & Doane, 2017). According to Mutume, (2001) discrimination occurs when both the sexes are treated in a biased way based on their gender category alone. Sexism has historically been enacted most often to the detriment of females.

Islamic Point of View: Islam gives equal rights to men and women." Be it man or woman, each of you is equal to the other." (Surah 3, verse 195). "The men or husbands are the protectors and guardians of their wives" (Qur'an, Chapter 4, verse 34). Examples are there where Muslim community discriminates even the Muslim women (Eid, 2005). This discrimination is the result of the people's ignorance of the true teachings of Islam where the women are demeaned, especially by cultural studies (Fournier, 2002). No doubt, Islam is a religion of peace and preaches gender equality, but its interpretations are contrary to this reality i.e., the ideas of sexism and gender discrimination are attached to the teachings of the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) (Pyle, 1996; Tinker, 2006).

Pakistan: Gender disparity is found almost all over the world (Shoaib, Saeed, & Cheema, 2012). However, the region where gender inequality is at its peak is the region of South Asia where maximum resources, awards and opportunities are reserved for men (Tanwir & Khemka, 2018; Virdee, 2019). Pakistan, an Islamic state in this region, too, exhibits gender disparities where these are spread across all classes, regions, and sectors (Malik & Courtney, 2011). The Pakistani women do not have an equal status be it social, mental, educational or professional as compared to that of their male counterpart (Shoaib,

Shaukat, Khan, & Saeed, 2013). The situation is worse in rural areas (Anwar, Shoaib, & Javed, 2013). Further, the new generation thinks that education plays a significant role in human development. It has been found very common that women are facing different issues linked with family setups, workplaces, getting education, getting equal rights, health issues, sexual abuses, and getting employment (Shoaib, Latif, & Usmani, 2013).

Several studies have been conducted to highlight the issue of gender inequality in Pakistani context, but less is known about the causes of these differences. Likewise, no prominent studies have been conducted to suggest the ways to combat with this imbalanced situation for the implementation by both the common people and policy levers (Khan, Jawed, & Qidwai, 2021). The present study is of significance as it delved deeply into the issue of gender with reference to several causative factors that contribute to gender discrimination in the selected region of Pakistan i.e., Gujrat, a city in Punjab, Pakistan. Other than the focus on causative factors, the researchers also suggest the ways to bring a change in the society for both the genders. Hence, the researchers aim to:

- study the reason for problems faced by females due to gender discrimination.
- check the association among certain variables that cause problems faced by females due to gender discrimination with gender.
- find the views of respondents about the existence of gender discrimination in Islam.
- see whether gender has any significant difference in response to each question.

The Data and Methods

This cross-sectional study was designed to collect quantitative data to gather information about gender discrimination in Punjab, Pakistan. A representative sample of 200 men and women facing gender-based discrimination was sampled using a snowball sampling technique from the district of Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire that had different sections including socio-demographic information such as age, sex, education, family problems, employment, rights, and sexual harassment. The respondents selected to answer this questionnaire were working in different domains including students, the holders of government and private jobs and housewives. Before final data collection, it was pretested from 30 selected women and the value of Alpha ranged from .709 to .885 which confirmed the measurement tool for final data collection. The data were analyzed, and the tables were drawn to show the trends of the data. A statistical test including chi-square to check the association had been employed.

Results and Discussion

Socio-demographic Data: The primary data outlined in Table 1 presents an overall division of the respondents of this study based on their gender, age, and occupations. The response category based on gender shows that out of 200 respondents, 40 percent are male respondents and 60 percent are female respondents. Similarly, 40.5 percent of respondents belong to the age group of 16-25 and 33 percent of respondents belong to the age group of 26-35. And 26.5 percent belong to the age group of 36-45. Depending upon their job or occupation, Table 1 shows that 39.5 percent of respondents are students, 35.5 percent respondents are from working class, and 25 percent respondents are housewives.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by Gender, Age, and Occupation

Gender	Response Category	Frequency	Percent
	Men	80	40.0
	Women	120	60.0
Age (Years)	16-25	81	40.5
	26-35	66	33.0
	36-45	53	26.5
Occupation	Students	79	39.5
	Working Class	71	35.5
	Housewives	50	25.0

Table 2 describes that 15 percent of respondents are in favor of gender discrimination and 85 percent of respondents are not in favor of gender discrimination. This analysis of the independent sample response based on chi-square test shows that there is an association between gender and favor of the respondent. This difference in response to favor shows a difference in the attitude of both the genders.

Similarly, 26 percent of respondents reply that the existence of gender discrimination in our society is high, 61 percent reply that it is medium, and 12.5 percent reply that it is low. However, 24 percent of respondents replied that gender discrimination exists in our society due to social setup. 35 percent of respondents reply that gender discrimination exists in our society due to a lack of religious knowledge and 41 percent reply that it exists in our society due to a lack of education. By applying chi-square, it is concluded there is an association between gender and the reason for the existence of gender discrimination in our society. Hence, the test for an independent sample shows that gender has a significant difference in response to the existence of gender discrimination in our society.

Likewise, 16.5 percent of respondents replied that gender discrimination is allowed in our religion and 83.5 percent replied that it is not allowed in our religion. By applying chi-square, it is concluded there is an association between gender and religion. Hence, gender has a significant difference in response to the existence of gender discrimination in our religion. Of 16.5 percent of respondents, the majority are males, who reply that gender discrimination is allowed in our religion.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of the Response towards Gender Discrimination (GD)

Response Categories		Male (No.)	Female (No.)	Total
Favor of GD	Yes	25	5	30
	No	55	115	170
Total				200
Existing of GD	High	21	32	53
	Medium	32	74	122
	Low	53	14	25
Total				200
Reason of GD	Social setup	11	37	48
	Lack of religious knowledge	28	42	70
	Lack of education	41	41	82
Total				200
GD in our religion	Yes	23	10	33
	No	10	110	167
Total				200
Female Problems at the Workplace	High	24	46	70
	Medium	40	63	103
	Low	16	11	27
				200
Female problems in family setup	High	26	20	46
	Medium	34	80	114
	Low	20	20	40
Total				200
Female problems in getting an education	Average	31	57	88
	High	21	19	40
	Low	28	44	72
Total				200
Side of restriction	Families	25	43	68
	Society	51	75	126
	Both	4	2	6
Total				200
Female gets rights given them by law	Yes	20	15	35
	No	60	105	165
Total				200
Employment Opportunity	Yes	33	33	66
	No	47	87	134
Total				200
Problems regarding health issues	Yes	55	100	155
	No	25	20	45
Total				200
The problem of sexual abuse	High	18	22	40
	Medium	33	48	81
	Low	29	50	79
Total				200
Role in the elimination of GD	People	42	84	126
	Government	25	21	46
	NGOs	13	15	28
Total				200

In the same way, 32 percent of respondents replied that females face problems at their workplaces. 54.5 percent of respondents replied that it is medium, and 13.55 percent of respondents replied that females face problems at their workplaces. By applying chi-square, it is concluded there is an association between gender and females facing problems at their workplaces. Based on the test for an independent sample, it is concluded that gender has a significant difference in response to females facing problems at their workplaces. Further, 23.5 percent of respondents replied that females face problems in their family setup are high. 57 percent reply that females face problems in their family setup are medium and 20 percent reply that females face problems in their family setup are low. By applying chi-square, it is concluded there is an association between gender and females facing problems in their family setups. The test for an independent sample shows that gender has no significant difference in response to female face problems in their family setups.

Correspondingly, 44 percent of respondents replied that the extent to which females face problems in getting an education is average, 20 percent replied that the extent to which females face problems in getting an education is high and 36 percent of respondents replied that the extent to which female face problems in getting education are low. By applying chi-square, it is concluded that there is no association between gender and female face problems in getting an education. By applying the test for independent sample, it is concluded that gender has a significant difference in response to female face problems in getting an education. Moreover, 34 percent of respondents replied that females face more restrictions from families while 63 percent of respondents replied that females face more restrictions from society. Three percent of respondents reply that females face more restrictions from both families and society.

Similarly, 17.5 percent reply that females get all the rights given to them by law, and 82.5 percent reply that females don't get all the rights given to them by law. It is concluded that there is an association between gender and females get all the rights given to them by law. By applying the test for an independent sample, it is concluded that gender has a significant difference in response to females getting all the rights given to them by law. In addition, 33 percent of respondents replied that females are getting equal employment opportunities, and 67 percent of respondents replied that females are not getting equal employment opportunities. By applying chi-square, it is concluded that there is an association between gender and females getting equal employment opportunity. By applying the test for an independent sample, it is concluded that gender has a significant difference in response to females getting equal employment opportunities.

They also outline that 77.5 percent of respondents reply that females face problems regarding health issues, and 22.5 percent of respondents reply that females don't face problems regarding health issues. By applying chi-square it is concluded that there is an association between gender and females facing problems regarding health issues. By applying the test for an independent sample, it is concluded that gender has significant differences in response to female face problems regarding health issues. However, 20 percent of respondents replied that the extent to which females face problems of sexual abuse is high. 40.5 percent of respondents replied that the extent to which females face problems of sexual abuse is low. 39.5 percent of respondents replied that the extent to which females face problems of sexual abuse is medium. As per previous discussion and data presented in Table 2, 63 percent of respondents reply that people play a vital role in the elimination of gender discrimination, 23 percent of respondents reply that government plays a vital role in the elimination of gender discrimination, and 14 percent respondents reply that NGO'S play a vital role in the elimination of gender discrimination. By applying chi-square, it is concluded that there is an association between gender and role of people, government, and NGOs. By applying the t-test for the independent sample it is concluded that gender has a significant difference in the response role of people, government, and NGOs.

Hypothesis: There is an association between gender discrimination and workplace, family, cultural values, education, cultural norms, employment, health, and sexual abuse.

Table 3: Independent Variables and Gender Discrimination

Independent Variables	Chi-Square	Df	P-Value
Workplace Factors	66.000a	3	0.000
Family Aspects	34.000	3	0.000
Cultural Values	14.138	3	0.003
Educational Matters	59.621b	2	0.000
Cultural Norms	50.414a	3	0.000
Employment Options	27.931a	3	0.000
Health Issues	31.793a	3	0.000
Sexual Abuse	27.793a	3	0.000

Conclusion

The study findings concluded that there is an association between gender with favor, reason, employment opportunity, health issues, workplace, rights, family setups, and role in the elimination of gender discrimination. Similarly, the study also depicted that gender has significant differences in response to favor, reason, religion, working place, rights, employment opportunity, and health issues. Gender discrimination has been found in several societies in the world. It refers to any situation where a person is denied an opportunity or misjudged solely based on their sex. It has also been argued that any unequal treatment may also be referred to as sex discrimination or sexism. Sexism has historically been enacted most often to the detriment of females. Sexism is a belief that one sex is superior to another.

Policy Recommendation

Creation of Awareness among the People: There is a huge requirement to create awareness among people. The major cause of practicing gender discrimination in our society is lack of education and lack of religious knowledge. Many people among us think that gender discrimination is allowed in our religion, they don't know what our religion says, and they just believe in the wrong interpretations of the Quran and Sunnah. So, by creating awareness among the people the extent of gender discrimination can be reduced in our society.

Government Policies: The government must arrange educational programs and seminars, especially in villages to create awareness among the people. The government must ensure that all organizations must provide equal employment opportunities. The government must take strong legal action against the organization that found the violence of equal employment opportunity.

Role of People: At last people can play an effective role in eliminating gender discrimination. Those who know the rights of women, and their social status, respect them, and are against gender discrimination must communicate these things to other people. If one person changes the attitude of only one person in their social circle, we will see that gender discrimination will vanish from our society in the coming few years. Moreover, the role of people is important in the sense that people give more privilege to their peers, or their social circles as compared to any other party so when this lesson is communicated by the social circle will be proved more effective as compared to any other. If all the above factors play their role on their side, we would be successful in eliminating gender discrimination from our society. Not only one of the above-mentioned factors can bring a complete change, but when all factors combine and work for this issue then we can bring a change in the attitude of people.

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