Beyond Borders: The Complexities of South Asian Masculinity at Home and Abroad

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Abstract

This study explores the complex and diverse character of South Asian masculinity, looking at its roots in politics, sociology, and ideology, both within South Asia and in the diaspora. This study focuses on Pakistan, exploring the impacts of colonialism, nationalism, and religious influences on male ideals. The interplay of these factors has led to a clash between contemporary and traditional identities. In the period of colonial dominance, the notions of courage, dignity, and insurrection were transformed through the interaction of Western masculinity and nationalist movements. Men from South Asia face a range of challenges as they navigate the intricacies of diaspora and migration. These challenges encompass economic pressures, cultural conflicts, and marginalization. The research emphasizes the impact of masculinity ideology on health, relationships, and overall well-being. By examining its ideas, conventions, and roles, we achieve a deeper insight into how this ideology influences men's lives.

Keywords: South Asian masculinity, masculinity in Pakistan, gender norms, cultural norms, social expectations, immigrant experience.

Introduction

Masculinity as an ideology refers to the views, conventions, and roles that men and boys have traditionally held. It comprises societal expectations and standards for male behavior and has an impact on many parts of life, including attitudes, relationships, and well-being (Pietraszkiewicz, Kaufmann, & Formanowicz, 2017; Jiang & Lv, 2012). It encompasses cultural beliefs, patterns of behavior, and roles typically associated with males and boys (Sinn, 1997). By normalizing antagonistic views of sexual interactions and fostering animosity, the idea of traditional masculinity negatively impacts behavior and relationships (Pleck, Sonenstein, & Ku, 1993; Sinn, 1997). The perception of relationships between men and women as confrontational is frequently the result of men who adhere to these norms, as they often exhibit inferior interpersonal skills and experience less intimacy with sexual partners. This can impede the establishment of supportive, healthy relationships (Lease, Çiftçi, & Boyraz, 2013). Cultural contexts have a tremendous impact on masculinity ideology, as proven by considerable discrepancies in men's opinions across countries such as the United States, Norway, and Turkey. For example, Russian men are more likely to adhere to traditional masculinity standards than their American counterparts, which is related with detrimental lifestyle choices (Levant, et al., 2003). Nontraditional masculinity ideas, on the other hand, usually emphasize emotional expressivity, holistic self-awareness, and authenticity, which is often consistent with feminist perspectives and the decrease of current misogyny (Kaplan, Rosenmann, & Shuhendler, 2017) Fathers who accept these new concepts are more emotionally engaged and responsible in caregiving, while also respecting traditional breadwinning responsibilities (Offer & Kaplan, 2021).

In contemporary times, gender roles are changing, and there have been more conversations on the idea of masculinity in the social sciences. This has had an impact on many fields and topics, including health, parenting, education, employment, and race (Collier, 2002). 'Masculinity' refers to a variety of cultural, social, and historical aspects, including but not limited to traditional masculine ideals, changing gender relations, and the importance of including varied perspectives from marginalized groups (Clatterbaugh, 1998).

Scholars are deeply divided on gender norms and contemporary ideas of manhood (Segal, 1993; Segal, 1990; Clatterbaugh, 1998; Coles, 2009). Hegemonic masculinity, which is idolized in society, is often characterized by strength, aggression, competitiveness, and emotional stoicism (Roberts, Elliott, & Ralph, 2021; Christofidou, 2021). From a theoretical standpoint, discussions of masculinity in literature typically focus on societal constructions and definitions (Boise, 2022). Some theories advocate for a more inclusive society, while others criticize conventional notions of masculinity, suggesting that stoicism and competitiveness can lead to destructive behaviors. The morality of these actions becomes a crucial part of the masculinity discussion. Researchers use empirical and rational perspectives to understand masculinity and its effects on individuals and communities. This involves examining the impact of conventional gender norms on men's psychological

well-being and trends in male-dominated industries. Questioning traditional masculinity is essential in academic discourse, and understanding the real effects of these norms requires empirical evidence.

Why Men Change?
Different worldviews influence explanations for why men change their conduct throughout time. Political and social philosophy can clarify these views. Modern sociocultural theory considers changing power relations, cultural norms, and social mores to illuminate this issue. Sexual orientation, color, social class, and place of origin affect masculinity, and changing cultural standards and economic pressures drive men to rethink their identities. These talks have focused more on mental health, especially male suicide rates and emotional discomfort.

Social institutions greatly influence men's behavior and self-image. Media, power structures, and institutional standards often promote emotional detachment, resoluteness, and inflexibility in men. Educational institutions and companies enforce these ideals by penalizing non-compliance. Power structures and media representations of men reinforce harmful masculinity norms, including violence, sexual assertiveness, and domination. Understanding and critically examining these effects is crucial for promoting inclusive and equitable masculinity.

Modern theoretical frameworks in sociocultural and multicultural masculinities (CSMM) emphasize how gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, race/ethnicity, and nation shape masculinity. Sociologists view gender as a lived experience and behavior, with masculinity being 'done' in specific social contexts (West & Zimmerman, 1987). It cannot be described by unchanging ideals or types. To understand masculinity, one must move beyond gender (Connell R. W., 1995, p. 76). Raewyn Connell's research on masculinities highlights the hierarchical nature of masculinity, with hegemonic masculinity at the top. This dominant form perpetuates harmful power dynamics and marginalizes those who do not fit the idealized image, disproportionately affecting women due to its expectations and inequities.

Judith Butler, a feminist scholar, argues that gender is not an innate quality, but a construct formed through repeated acts (Reddy & Butler, 2004). From this perspective, men can question and undermine traditional masculinity. By altering their actions, individuals can challenge dominant gender conventions and develop new expressions of masculinity.

Psychologist Michael Kimmel (Kimmel, 2017) expands on this idea by exploring how power shapes masculine identities. Some men may resist change due to benefits derived from traditional forms of male domination, while others may rebel against restrictive gender norms by seeking new ways to express masculinity.

Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony provides a comprehensive framework for studying the societal maintenance and perpetuation of hegemonic masculinity (Mouffe, 2014). Gramsci believes that dominant groups retain their domination through cultural acceptability. This concept is relevant to masculinity because males may grow to accept societal standards including masculine domination as unavoidable. Family, schools, and the media support traditional masculinity, molding people's identities and behaviors within larger cultural contexts.

Gramsci contends that cultural production and practices play an important role in maintaining hegemonic masculinity.

Whether Men and Masculinity have Truly Changed
The question of whether men and masculinity have truly changed highlights empirical inquiries into documenting change and differing opinions on what signifies change. Others demonstrate that real divisions in domestic labor hours have not coincided with these shifting attitudes, despite claims that attitudes towards sexuality, domestic work, and emotions have eased. This reflects stalled progressive attitudes and the coexistence of persistence and change in societal responses to cultural shifts. Recent research focuses on whether males can change, how this change is viewed, and its relationship to power and privilege. Studies on sexual flexibility in non-heterosexual men reveal that hegemonic elements are present despite evolving masculinity norms. Additionally, discussions include 'The Fantasy of the New Man' and the transformation of masculinity representations worldwide and in Western nations concerning gender roles.

The Fantasy of the New Man
The concept of the "new man" serves as a lens through which we can reassess established gender roles and societal expectations. As Swedish shows like "Men and Gender Equality" attempt to reevaluate traditional masculinity from a norm-critical perspective, yet they are frequently it end up reinforcing neoliberal ideals and preexisting social standards (Olsson & Lauri, 2022). This tension highlights the complexity of reshaping masculinity in modern times. Fictional and historical accounts, particularly in neo-Victorian literature, present the "new man" as a feminist idealist who questions modern gender roles (Stetz, 2015). The figure is retrospectively projected into the past, using him to challenge contemporary gender norms and broaden feminist sympathies. Stories that aim for a better world, like Bellamy's *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* (1931), portray a society that is perfect in every way and express hope for a better tomorrow. The novel presents a utopian vision of the future where social harmony and material abundance are achieved. In implying that moral rebirth and social reform are within reach, this story echoes a larger American literary myth regarding man's perfectibility. Together, these perspectives shed light on the complexities and conflicts of the "new man" idea.

From these fictional and cultural depictions, the "new man" thesis has also been intimately connected with significant ideological movements past. Although usually connected with social upheavals, this notion has been fundamental in both fascist and communist ideas since it represented the development of an ideal human being — morally, psychologically, and physically superior. Various figures have idealized and utilized this persona as a revolutionary instrument, such as Mussolini's *Uomo Nuovo* in Fascist Italy and Marxist notions of a morally exalted "new man" in Communist ideology (Cheng, 2008; Li, 2012; Dagnino, 2016). By drawing connections between these seemingly unrelated ideas, it becomes evident that the "new

man" represents the idealized, transformed humanity that exists across different ideological landscapes; he also challenges established gender norms and stands at the crossroads of greater social, political, and cultural revolutions.

The "new man" was a key figure in communist ideology, particularly in the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, who sought to improve society via intellectual and moral reform (Skradol, 2009) (Skradol, 2009). According to Kapcia (2005) and Porshneva & Сергеевна (2019) , the idea of a "new man" played a crucial role in communist governments, where it was associated with the establishment of an ideal society by means of ideological and moral reform. Influential figures in politics, the educational system, and the casting of communist role models all contributed to aligning Soviet citizens with those goals. Through political socialization, education, and the production of role models, the Soviet Union sought to influence the behavior and worldview of its people to conform to communist principles, thereby engineering the "new man" (Sukhonos & Murach, 2020; Cheng, 2008).

Similarly, moral standards and educational reforms had a significant impact on Cuba's "new man" particularly during the 1960s and after the 2001 educational reforms (Kapcia, 2005). Cultural and normative notions of masculinity had a profound impact on politics during this period. In fascist ideology, the "new man" represented a revolutionary totalitarian society prioritizing the group over individuals and promoting a new form of modernity. This included establishing a new civilization and maximizing individual potential within a communal setting, as seen in Italy (Dagnino, 2016). Fascist rhetoric in Romania also aligned with broader fascist ideologies in Europe (Clark, 2018). The "new man" theme extended beyond authoritarianism or extreme right-wing movements, influencing various political ideologies in interwar France (Tumblety, 2018). Democratic and authoritarian eras alike saw the emergence of this concept, which also resonated with Catholicism, imperialism, liberalism, and conservatism, reflecting its broader cultural and political significance.

Utopian socialism and Enlightenment ideas gave birth to the "new man" concept, emphasizing the possibility of societal and human perfection. This concept serves as a metaphor for utopian hopes, demonstrating how political and utopian ideologies have merged in contemporary times (Skradol, 2009).

Contemporary Concept of Masculinity

The evolving concept of masculinity in contemporary society reflects a dynamic interplay between cultural, social, and economic changes. What were formerly considered as antithetical to traditional gender norms—inclusion and emotional intimacy—are now essential components of contemporary masculinity. This shift dismantles the conventional norms that have always controlled men's conduct and encourages a more transparent expression of feelings (Connor, Edvardsson, Fisher, & Spelten, 2021). One literary manifestation of this shift is the portrayal of masculine characters as emotionally vulnerable as seen in works by Haruki Murakami and others (Mukherjee & Swamy, 2019). Masculinity principles that prioritize gender equality have institutionalized this shift in nations such as Denmark (Bloksgaard, et al., 2015)

Hybrid and inclusive masculinity theories account for this change by positing that modern men combine elements of both conventional and modern masculinity to produce a new, more malleable identity. According to Coles (2009), men adapt to these shifts by rethinking what it means to be masculine and, depending on their social situation, bargaining between competing ideals of masculinity. Different masculinities coexist and compete within diverse societal subfields, which he explains by drawing from Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, and fields and Connell's thesis of hegemonic masculinity. Showcased most prominently in events like Mister International, the emergence of metrosexuality—a combination of conventional masculinity and feminine characteristics—illustrates this balancing act (Habib, Ratnaningsih, & Nisa, 2020)

It is still believed that the ideal man should succeed financially while also taking care of his family and society in peri-urban China and other parts of the world (Wong, 2016). This exemplifies the fact that modern masculinity modifies tradition rather than destroying it to conform to societal changes. There is no longer a single hegemonic paradigm of masculinity; rather, numerous dominant masculinities exist, each adapted to a different social and cultural context (Coles, 2009).

Various socioeconomic variables, such as race and class, influence the expectations and performance of masculinity today. As a result, the modern ideal of masculinity is being better understood via an intersectional lens (Baker & Levon, 2015). The Athlete, Family Man, Adventurer, and Goal-Driven Man are just a few of the masculinity themes shown in advertising, which reflects this complexity by both promoting and challenging conventional ideas of manhood (Zayer, 2010). Thus, contemporary masculinity is multifaceted concept, shaped by a diverse range of influences and evolving alongside broader societal changes.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Masculinity

Looking at masculinity ideology from many cultural angles shows how cultural norms and ideas impact men's behavior, relationships, and views. More inclusive and emotionally expressive forms of masculinity are becoming fashionable, which is causing a global shift away from more traditional conceptions of masculinity (Borkowska, 2016). Western youth, particularly middle-class heterosexual men, are embracing new forms of masculinity that emphasize resistance, emotional connection, physicality, and inclusivity (Connor, Edvardsson, Fisher, & Spelten, 2021). Considerations such as the cultural relevance of masculine characteristics, their effect on interpersonal dynamics, the rise of inclusive masculinities, the impact of media and social pressures, and racial and ethnic dynamics are crucial to comprehending these changes. Newer views on manhood contrast with traditional ideas of masculinity, which have a reputation for encouraging destructive patterns of conduct and relationships. Thus, a few significant discoveries of cultural masculinity are as follows:

Cultural Specificity: Masculinity differs greatly from one culture to another. As an example, Compared to Anglo-Americans, Chileans place a higher priority on responsibility and toughness when it comes to masculinity (Doss & Hopkins, 1998). Russian men, on the other hand, are more likely to adhere rigidly to traditional notions of masculinity, which has a direct impact on their health behaviors and, consequently, less self-care than American males (Levant, et al., 2003).

Interpersonal Relationships: Masculinity standards impact men's capacity to establish and sustain relationships. For instance, research has shown that American and Turkish men tend to have better interpersonal skills than their Norwegian counterparts because Norwegian men are more likely to adhere to traditional masculinity standards (Lease, et al., 2013). There is an increased risk of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases in traditionalist adolescent guys because they have more sexual partners and less committed partnerships (Pleck, Sonenstein, & Ku, 1993).

Shift Towards Inclusive Masculinities: More accepting definitions of masculinity are emerging, ones that place a premium on interpersonal intimacy and downplay traditional gender norms (Connor, Edvardsson, Fisher, & Spelten, 2021). Some ideas that reflect this change are the "new father," who challenges traditional views of parenthood as mainly a provider function and instead encourages men to participate with their children in a real and emotionally loving way (Offer & Kaplan, 3021).

Media and Societal Influences: Media depictions of masculinity, particularly among young men, have a substantial impact on the development of masculine identity. There is a correlation between the prevalence of negative portrayals of body image and conventional masculine norms and the development of anxiety and stress (Pompper, 2010). Certain masculine values have been historically created and reinforced by broader cultural factors, such as military, social, and economic influences, especially in capitalist countries (Connell R. , 1993).

Racial and Ethnic Dynamics: Adding another layer to these notions is the intersection of masculinity and race, which impacts ethnic and racial dynamics. Narratives that emphasize and perpetuate racial hierarchies frequently racially stereotype masculinity by pitting white masculinity against black manhood. These interactions further muddy the waters when it comes to how various racial and ethnic groups conceptualize and act out masculinity (Bucholtz, 1999).

This suggests that masculinity evolves through a complex interaction between long-standing norms and changing ideals influenced by social, cultural, and racial factors. Understanding how a culture shapes men's identities, actions, and relationships is essential to understanding manhood. In this context, South Asian masculinity's various expressions and meanings become clear.

South Asian Masculinity

Cultural, social, political, and historical aspects shape South Asian masculinity, which is diverse and interdependent. In the area, colonialism, nationalism, caste, and class have influenced men's identities. The construction of these identities is influenced by various factors, such as local circumstances, societal norms, and power relations. Chakraborty (2014) claims that South Asian religious turmoil and civil battles have shaped current views of masculinity. Modern South Asian masculinity discourses have illuminated many social issues, including upper-caste men and Dalits' challenges. According to Gopinath and Sundar (2020), colonialism has given rise to increasingly aggressive upper-caste masculinities among conservative Hindus. Colonial rulers and upper castes exercised social control over Dalits, shaping Dalit masculinities (Gupta, 2010). The socioeconomic position of Dalit males and traditional ideas of masculinity shape contemporary views. Identities are shifting as Dalit masculinity gains traction in political and academic spheres. A growing number of Dalit men are speaking out against caste systems (Ciotti, 2011). Masculinity among Dalits frequently goes against societal patriarchal standards (Shokeen, 2022). For Dalits, injustice and caste violence deepen this paradox. In contemporary India, dominant castes define masculinity narratives through their struggles with Dalit males for acceptance and dignity (Beniwal & Chattopadhyay, 2022).

They argue that R.W. Connell's hegemonic masculinity theory is suitable for studying gender, sexual orientation, religion, caste, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. This theory holds that gender inequity and social hierarchy shape cultural masculinity. The southern Indian Sabarimala pilgrimage depicts how Hinduism builds masculinity via discipline and abstinence. Despite Hindu ancestry, cultural standards affect Muslim masculinities in the region. This pilgrimage emphasizes strength, discipline, and communal identification among southern Indian Hindus and Muslims, who regard masculinity similarly (Osella & Osella, 2003). The pilgrimage is a male-dominated activity that promotes a form of spiritual and communal masculinity through renunciation and strict discipline. Although it appears egalitarian, the ritual subtly reinforces gender disparities by positioning women as the absent "other." As Osella and Osella (2003) note, the pilgrimage influences both the austere renouncers and the worldly householders within the community, shaping masculine identities across religious boundaries in the region. This shared emphasis on masculinity through religious and cultural practices, however, also mirrors the broader societal struggles tied to male dominance and control.

One of the more troubling aspects of this is the strong correlation between masculinity and acts of violence against women. Men often grapple with feelings of inadequacy, as well as desires for power, love, and dominance, leading to problematic behaviors. In South Asia, military masculinity has, particularly in times of crisis, normalized and legitimized sexual violence by linking it to male authority and militarized power.

However, there is also a shift taking place. A generational change has taken place in Dhaka, with young men rejecting patriarchal norms and embracing alternative, more progressive conceptions of manhood. More and more, these new masculinities value economic independence and sexual agility above everything else. Media, education, and global discourse have all played a role in this shift, as they have pushed younger men in Bangladesh toward a more egalitarian and inclusive conception of manhood (Camellia & Roodsaz, 2023; Ondekova, McCarthy, & Power, 2023). Regardless of generational differences in views on sexuality, religion, and work, one thing has stayed the same: men are still expected to be the primary breadwinners. Because it considers the cultural, economic, and historical aspects that have affected masculinity in Bangladesh, Hasan, Aggleton, and Persson (2018) argue that a social generational lens is helpful for comprehending this common ideal. Another way that media projects like films help to dismantle and rebuild patriarchy is by illuminating the changing nature of masculinity. These media portray the lived reality of specific male groups while also reflecting general

trends by accounting for variables like class, caste, and sexual orientation (Poudyal, 2000; Roy, 2001). According to this view, cultural narratives and social changes have contributed to the development of men's identities in Bangladesh.

Societal Challenges Faced by South Asian Masculinity

Social, economic, cultural, and identity issues make it hard for South Asian males to assert their masculinity. Moreover, racism, migration, and cultural expectations worsen them. There is a complicated network of social, religious, political, and historical influences on South Asian masculinities that Western notions of masculinity may fail to account for.

In response to the economic problems and gendered character of service occupations faced by young South Asian guys, a new form of masculinity called as "protest masculinity" is forming on the margins (Connell, 1991; Totten, 2003; McDowell, Rootham, & Hardgrove, 2014). Among its many manifestations, this gendered identity opposes and even idealizes hegemonic masculinity (Walker, 2006). The fear of losing one's job has an impact on urban men's masculinity, according to Camellia and Roodsaz (2023). These pressures disproportionately affect middle-class guys living in cities. According to McDowell, Rootham, and Hardgrove (2014), this kind of masculinity is the root source of urban discontent and societal upheaval.

The issue of masculinity becomes much more complex when South Asian men settle in Western countries as immigrants. More problems with "failing masculinity" arise as a result of state legislation that target particular groups for discrimination, including Muslims, immigrants, and persons of color. Goh and Trofimchuk (2023) say Westerners despise South Asian beards and other masculine features and equate them to terrorism. Many South Asian men develop compensatory masculinity to cope with this strain. Their fragile migratory status makes it hard for them to embody hegemonic masculinity. This conflict shows how migratory conditions can cause economic and social marginalization, upsetting masculinity ideals, according to Kukreja (2020).

Cultural and gender norms significantly shape how South Asian men, both young and old, express masculinity, particularly regarding health and fitness. Thangaraj (2010) highlights those young South Asian athletes in white-dominated sports face racial and gender expectations, navigating a competitive environment that challenges their masculinity.

Muslim South Asian men who are members of sexual minority in Western nations face further marginalization due to Islamophobia, racism, and homophobia. Their sexuality, religion, and cultural background make it difficult for them to act masculine. Some persons experience intense psychological distress due to issues with self-identity and social rejection. According to Mitha, Ali, and Koç (2021), these men face even more difficulties as a result of their lack of agency and hostile work conditions.

Pakistani Masculinity

To fully grasp Pakistani masculinity, one must examine its foundations in Islam, cultural, and societal mores. Liberal, religious, conservative, and hegemonic norms all have an impact on Pakistani masculinity, making it complex. The media portrayal of men, religious groups, political figures, and societal expectations all contribute to the complexity of Pakistani masculinity.

Virtuous manhood symbolizes masculinity in religious groups like the Tablighi Jamaat. This masculinity teaches humility, compassion, and religious and ethical behavior. The Tablighi Jamaat's structured preaching promotes moral and introspective masculinity and challenges liberal-secular interpretations of religious events. Khan (2018) claims that this promotes religion as a male trait in Pakistan, emphasizing spiritual masculinity.

Islamism empowers Pakistani males to assert their masculinity in political and social situations. There is a clear association between struggles for honor and self-actualization and this type of masculinity, which depicts males as defenders of religion and national identity. This draws attention to the ways in which religion has influenced men's values and actions, tying collective and individual conflicts to broader historical and cultural currents (Aslam, 2014).

The urban 4Dman, a popular feature on Pakistani magazine covers, is another important dimension. This ideal male figure exemplifies strength and support while also exuding self-assurance, physical fitness, and good grooming (Zafar, Ahmad, & Raza, 2022). Typical male attire is that of Pakistani culture, which places equal emphasis on modern ambitions and traditional values. This depiction provides a more complete picture of Pakistani masculinity by showcasing a combination of modernity and heritage.

Pakistani television serials, on the other hand, frequently portray a dominant masculinity that is associated with social strife and the subjugation of women's rights. Patriarchal standards and this kind of masculinity are considered as the main reasons why gender inequality persists. Reinforcing traditional gender norms that restrict the autonomy of both sexes, it depicts males as the dominant individuals who govern the social and familial systems (Aslam, Mahmood, & Saeed, 2022).

Another important factor in molding national discourse is political and populist masculinities. Redeemed Sufi masculinity mixes spiritual salvation with heteronormative ideals and military might; leaders such as Imran Khan exemplify this. In addition to supporting patriarchy, this masculinity model fits nicely with regional security strategies by highlighting resiliency, strength, and conventional male roles in society and the workplace (Zia, 2022).

A Pakistani scale measuring issues such as male privilege, authority, conventional roles, avoiding effeminacy, and limiting emotionality provides deeper insight into the country's masculinity ideas (Imtiaz & Kamal, 2023) . It is clear from these views that traditional male features and the avoidance of actions seen as feminine are the prevailing gender standards in Pakistani society. As a result of trying to balance social norms with their own experiences, men's limited emotionality is a common source of friction in relationships.

During the COVID-19 epidemic, male civil servants in Pakistan demonstrated both hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities, highlighting the plasticity of masculine identities in the country. Men's ability to shift from more stereotypically

authoritative positions to more caring and responsive ones in times of high stress exemplifies how culturally particular contexts shape and challenge standard notions of masculinity (Chaudhry & Amis, 2021).

The societal construction of Pakistani masculinity is full of tension and internal struggles. Men suffer greatly from gender norms in their personal and professional lives (Khan & Malik, 2023). Gender prejudice also affects cultural standards of physical attractiveness, especially after marriage, when women are expected to follow propriety and domestic obligations and men are granted greater freedom.

Ethical Perspective (Why & How men should change)

The ethical perspective on why and how men should change revolves around the necessity for them to challenge patriarchal norms and engage in self-reflection to foster a more equitable society. Influenced by feminist thought, particularly hooks' insights, this approach emphasizes that men must actively participate in dismantling oppressive structures and re-examine their roles within gender dynamics. Historically, the call for men to change has been framed as a political act, rooted in the women's liberation movement, which argued that challenging traditional gender stereotypes benefits both men and society. By adopting qualities typically associated with femininity, such as emotional awareness, men can redefine masculinity and contribute to gender equality. Participation in feminist initiatives reflects a broader movement towards addressing gender inequalities. The women's liberation movement, which sought to dismantle rigid gender norms on the grounds that doing so would be good for men and society at large, provided the historical context for the current push for males to evolve. To help achieve gender parity, males should embrace feminine traits like emotional intelligence and reimagine what it means to be a man. Engaging in feminist activities is indicative of a larger movement that aims to solve gender inequality. Furthermore, men can live more real lives as a result of feminism's social advances that free them from limiting gender norms (Hanisch, 1969; Cornell, 1998). Not only does this emancipation help women, but it also improves men's health and relationships.

The urgent issue of climate change requires males to confront gender stereotypes and social systems. To maintain their masculinity, males typically ignore environmental challenges and reject green practices (Olson, 2023). Environmental damage can result from toxic masculinity. South Asian men must do more to combat climate change by standing up for women's rights, valuing their input when making decisions, advocating policies that increase women's access to resources, and challenging patriarchal beliefs that restrict women's agency (Md, Gomes, Dias, & Cerdà., 2022). By accepting these changes, they may eliminate gender disparity and build resilient, sustainable societies (Aamer, 2021; Aita & Ahmed, 2022). Conservatives believe men should act more traditionally, but this ignores gender dynamics and social change (Merdassa, 2023). In short, men have an ethical obligation to fight patriarchy, promote gender equality, and adapt to changing societal norms for the sake of all.

Conclusions

Cultural, racial, socioeconomic, and sexual orientation norms are some of the factors that shape modern masculinity. While unconventional masculinity encourages being genuine and expressing emotions, traditional masculinity can cause problems in relationships and homophobia. The modern man juggles traditional roles as breadwinner and emotional openness and caregiving with more modern ones. The media, popular culture, and educational institutions all have a role in shaping traditional masculinity norms and fostering more inclusive and equal ones. In order to fight against damaging gender norms, it is helpful to understand these connections. Men adjust to changing societal standards by blending conventional and contemporary notions of masculinity. Across ideologies and cultures, the "new man" stands as a symbol of idealized masculinity, representing a shift in social and moral norms. Studies of masculinity theory should look at how new standards influence men's actions and responsibilities, and studies of masculinity in action should inform policies and programs aimed at improving masculine norms. These global trends in masculinity also have significant implications for men in South Asia and Pakistan.

Many social, psychological, and cultural aspects impact how men in South Asia and Pakistan see themselves as masculine. Immigrant experiences, cultural norms, social expectations, economic status, and social standing all play a part in how men perceive themselves and their place in society. Anxieties over money and social exclusion are major factors in shaping men's conceptions of masculinity, which might manifest as "protest masculinity." Many factors, including global trends and immigrant experiences, impact how masculinity is conceptualized. Racism in the West has the potential to expand our conception of masculinity by casting doubt on long-held ideas about the nature of manhood. Media, religion, politics, and tradition all play significant roles in shaping men's conceptions of masculinity, which in turn affects their perspectives on modernism, conservatism, and liberalism. Religion, sexuality, and race are the factors that repressed and immigrant men encounter, and these factors can erode their masculinity and add to their sense of marginalization. To establish more inclusive and equitable societies, it is imperative that males prioritize emotional intelligence and gender equality and reject patriarchal attitudes.

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