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EXPLORING SEXISM IN PAKISTAN IN CONTEXT TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY USING SECONDARY DATA FROM THE WORLD VALUES SURVEY

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Abstract

In Pakistan, women are not encouraged to do jobs. The objective of this paper is to examine the sexism in Pakistan, in context specifically to education and employment. This study uses secondary data from the World Value Survey (WVS), seventh wave, to assess the extent of discrimination in Pakistani society, as perceived by both men and women. The SPSS software has been used to conduct data analysis and both descriptive statistics, correlation and regression results have been reported. The analysis provides evidence that sexism exists in Pakistan with regard to education and participation in employment. The study findings imply that Pakistan needs critical policy development to support women's equal opportunities with respect to both education and paid work.

Keywords

Sexism, Education, Employment, Pakistan, World Value Survey



1. Introduction

Pakistan is located in South Asia with a population of 220 million (Akram, 2021). It is a conservative country, where women are not encouraged to work outside the home due to traditions and family honor codes. Women are more than half of the total population (Iqbal *et*

al., 2012) and yet majority are deprived of education from primary to tertiary level (Farooq *et al.*, 2019). Although awareness of women's rights has increased over time and more women can be found in the education and employment structures, the country is still dominated by a

culture of masculine supremacy (Afzal & Akar, 2020). Overall, it is the men that dominate public spaces and the economic structures of society (Hadi, 2017). Some scholars argue that Pakistani culture inherently considers women as second-class citizens (Shah & Baporikar, 2013). Women are considered as a burden on the family because they are financially dependent on men. They have no jobs, no finance, and also lack cultural and family support leaves women to be silent and bear all the anger. Education is important to seek knowledge and it is internationally accepted that education makes women more productive and independent both the inside and outside. The legal system does not protect women within the home, public spaces, or workplace (Khan, 2020). Even where the law exists, there is poor implementation (Yunis *et al.*, 2019). The consequences of this structural discrimination against women have implications on children and the quality of family life overall. In addition, the culture of masculine supremacy is also known to be the cause of gender-based violence. In many countries, programs are being developed to improve equality. The first step involves legislation in favor of women's presence in the employment sector. The second step has been to promote equality through awareness campaigns, education, and art. As a third step, in recent years, there have been efforts to promote male responsibilities for the home and with the children, example including paid paternity leave in employment benefits.

2. Literature Review

Though in the early years of human society, there was no social difference between men and women, over time women have assumed an inferior role in society (Devlin, 2015). In ancient times, human society's real competition was with the environment, and time and energy were spent on survival and defense, from the weather and animals. Issues of gender status in society were less complex, and the division of labor between man and women was based on needs for survival. This division of labor within families and society was based on biology and did not lead to complex social stratification (Bukhari & Ramzan, 2013). Women were required to spend time for caring the home and children; whereas men devoted most of their time to hunting and defense. The women of Pakistan comprise almost half the population and are key agents for the social and economic development of the country (Ashraf *et al.*, 2017). Most of the women however suffer from complex problems related to equal participation in the education and employment sector. Overall Pakistani society is dominated by men across its social sub-structures, including: family, education, economy, and the legal system (Ali *et al.*, 2012).

2.1 Education

Majority of the working women are either unpaid laborers or part of the informal economy. The problem starts with the primary education level from which the high number of dropouts prevents the female students to reach high school (Khurram, 2017). The problem is really serious in the rural areas where there are limited

opportunities for girls but in urban areas, girls from middle and elite class families get greater opportunities for education and employment. Educated and independent women of urban areas enjoy better social status than the uneducated girls in remotes areas of Pakistan.

2.2 Employment

Low literacy levels of Pakistani women, means that they are exclusively dependent on men for finances and decision-making (Hussain et al., 2020). Majority of the women in Pakistan belong to the rural areas. This discriminatory structure does not support the women to engage in paid work outside the home and most women are unpaid domestic laborers (Agha et al., 2018). Rural women face even greater cultural barriers to accessing education and paid employment. Ironically, it is the rural women of Pakistan who contribute to the agricultural sector's success (Khatoon).

2.3 Perceptions and Patriarchy

Both men and women have adopted patriarchal norms in Pakistan. Not only do men treat women unequally, but women also readily accept an inferior position within the home and at the workplace. This patriarchal mindset and behavior have roots in history and traditions. The birth of the girl-child is looked down upon and generally there is son-preference. Even the mother herself does not welcome the birth of the baby girl, which contributes to low self-esteem in women and feelings of guilt as women are considered the property of men, the main decision makers are male family members such as fathers, brothers, and husbands. It is these men who usually decide

participation in higher education and paid employment of women. The man is considered more valuable in the culture and society in terms of economic and social values. The cultural values can only be changed by empowering the women. In the past few decades, it can be seen clearly in the official documents that Gender sexism leads towards women insecurities in all spheres of life which includes health, education, employment, and also political participation. These values and the weak position of women in society create gender-based aggression against women. No society or country is free from gender-based issues it is considered a phenomenon. Women usually ignore domestic violence because they are targeted by close relatives and the culture does not support the idea to report the cases to the police. The lack of cultural and family support leaves women to be silent and bear all the aggression. Culture is a strong barrier to the education of the girls which convinced the parents not to send their daughters to co-education institutions. Another reason is the poor environment and lack of basic facilities for the girls also discourages the parents to allow their daughter to attend the schools. According to the national education policy Pakistan 2007, the educational status of women is low not only in the country but also among the world. The majority of girls from low-income families have never attended school these families prefer boys' education and the majority of boys from these families have attended school (Rehman et al., 2015). And this trend is very common in rural areas where girls are given the gift of alternative

household chores and early marriage (Rajwani & Pachani, 2015). It is important to maintain gender equality in the world, especially in the developing world. She is the woman who brought us into the world and how unethical and unreasonable is the behavior for the women in Pakistan. The promotion of gender equality will also promote economic growth. In Pakistani masculine (Ahmad & Shah, 2019) culture males get a better education because they are considered the head of the families and they need better jobs and good earning to run the family affairs, and women are expected to stay at home as good wives and mothers. Women have very limited choices for their own lives (ur Rahman et al., 2018). Pakistan is facing a wide gender gap in terms of education, jobs, and health services. Women are considered as a burden on the family because they do not earn (Paynter, 2018). Despite the effort, Pakistan is still among those countries with gender issues. Gender inequality in education causes poverty in Pakistan. The family size and male-female ratio are also associated with poverty and prove that education for girls will provide them job opportunities that can reduce the poverty. Male children enjoy more family resources, love, and care than female children. In terms of nutrition, more focus is given to boys than girls also lead to the weak health of women. Education is important to seek knowledge and it is internationally accepted that education makes women more productive and independent both the inside and outside. Educated women can better contribute to the family education, better health and can help in financial matters. Among

the 144 countries of the world, Pakistan was ranked 136th by Gender Gap Index in 2017 on education attainment (Paynter, 2018). It is examined that the dropout rate among female school students is high in rural areas because of lack of facilities and parents deciding their marriage at a young age. Women cannot get proper health services as they are dependent on men for transport and finance. Women are not allowed to go alone to any place and they are also not allowed to travel alone. They need to get permission from the male head of the family and sometimes those males delay their decision which affects women's health. Lack of education and knowledge about when to visit the doctor affects their health conditions. The male dominant society puts great pressure on women in every field of life. The girl's level of education is very low in Pakistan as compared to the boys. For economic development is important to educate the girls. Enrollment of girls in educational institutes is low in rural areas (Rasheed et al., 2021). Women have very low participation in the labor market and economic activities due to the culture and tradition which are mostly inherited from the colonial period. The investigation highlights the issue that the unemployment rate of women is high in Pakistan and also the education level is low (Khalil, 2021). The study and researches about gender discrimination in Pakistan suggest that inequality needs attention both at the social and political level and practices. Both the cultural and political practices restrict the women to participate equally to the men (Patimah et al., 2021).

3. Aim of Study

The aim of this study is to use secondary data from the World Value Survey in order to investigate the following areas of perceived sexism in Pakistani society: (i) Equal rights for university level education for women, (ii) Income-earning opportunities for women, and (iii) Belief that working mothers neglect their pre-school aged children.

4. Methodology

4.1 Ethics and Permission

For this study, the researcher has used online and publicly available data from the WVS pertaining to gender and Pakistan, from the WVS 7th wave collected between 2017-2020 (Inglehart, 2020). Furthermore, the researchers also gained permission to use this data by WVS via email.

4.2 Research Design

This is a quantitative cross-sectional study, employing secondary data. The secondary data was downloaded from the official website of the World Value Survey (Inglehart, 2020).

4.3 Sample Selection

A total of 1995 respondents from Pakistan were included in the WVS survey. This sample is based on random selection and there are sub-units, located at a distance, were assigned to collect the data. The final sample includes people of both genders, male (55%) and female (45%), above the age of 18 years, living in a private residence, and includes representation from all religions and ethnicities of the country.

4.4 Data Collection

World Value Survey used the survey methods of face-to-face interviews. Respondents, both men

(55%) and women (45%) were interviewed at their homes. For this study, the following statements from the WVS have been used to identify women's position in Pakistan:

1. "University education is more important for boys than girls".
2. "Men have more rights to do a job than women".
3. "Pre-school child suffers with working women".

In lieu of the above items and the literature review for this study, we have developed the following hypotheses:

- H1. Low education level leads sexism in Pakistan
- H2. Low-income level increases sexism in Pakistan

4.5 Data Analysis

The researcher has used SPSS software to analyze and interpret the data. Three Likert scale responses of "Agree", "Disagree" or "Neither" have been used to measure the two domains of employment and schooling. Whereas, a 5-point Likert scale, "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" have been used to measure the domain of University Education. The missing values have been deleted and the dependent variables have been used to present "sexism". Both descriptive statistics and regression analysis has been used for the analysis.

5. Results

5.1 Sexism, Education and Income

Correlation and regression analysis reveals that when education is low, sexism is high. Figures show the results of respondents 'strongly agree' or 'disagree' with the statements. Thus, overall

majority of people in Pakistani society believe compared to females. that university is more important for males

Table 1: Respondants education level in Pakistan

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	1088	54.5
Middle	697	34.9
High	207	10.4
Total	1992	99.8

In table 1 the data shows that majority of respondents are low in education and 10% respondents are having high level of education.

Table 2: Respondants Income level in Pakistan

Income Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	645	32.3
Medium	1070	53.6
High	167	8.4
Total	1882	94.3

In table 2 the data shows that 32% respondents are low in education 53% are at medium level and only 8% are at high in education.

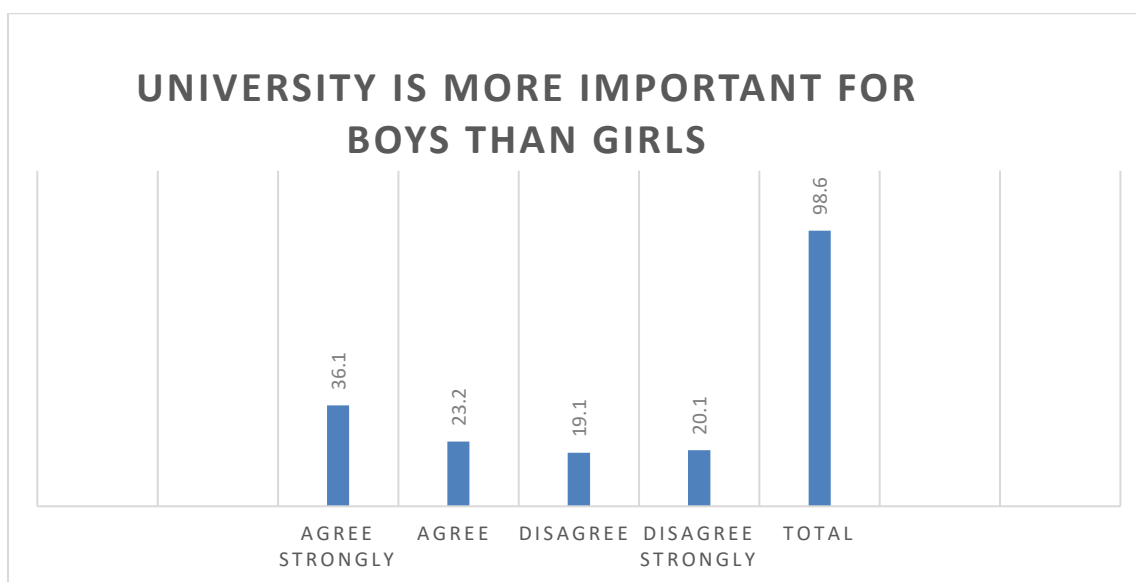


Figure 1: University is more important for boys than girls

Figure 1 shows that 36.1% of respondents university is more important for boys than girls; 'strongly agree' with the statement that and 23% 'agree' with the statement.

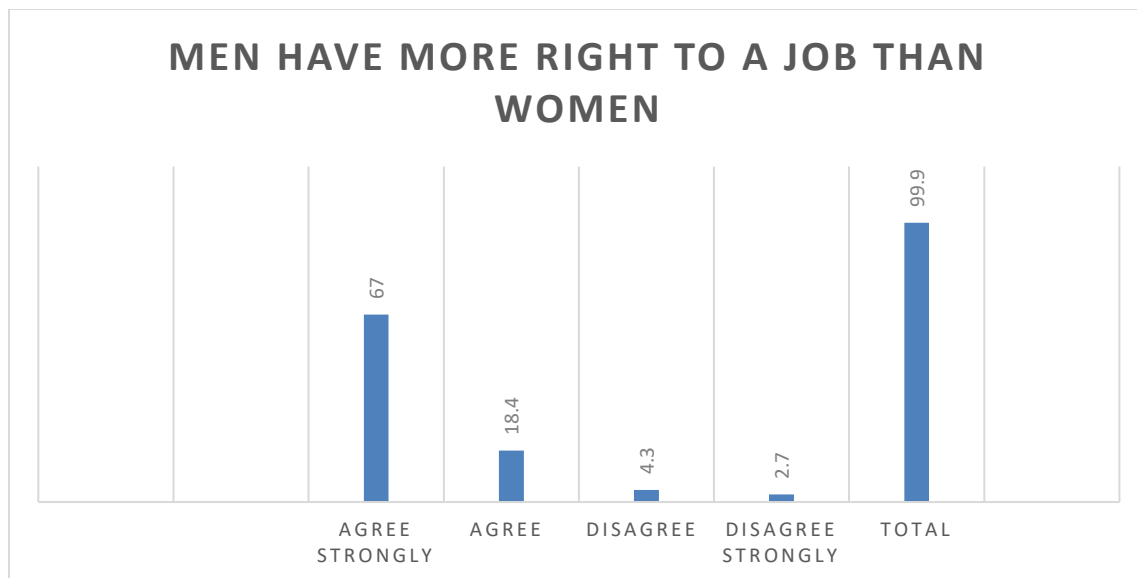


Figure 2: Men have more rights to do the job

In figure 2 the results show that 67% respondents are strongly agree that men have more right to do a job and 18% are agree with the statement. It

shows that majority people in Pakistan do support men to do a job than women.

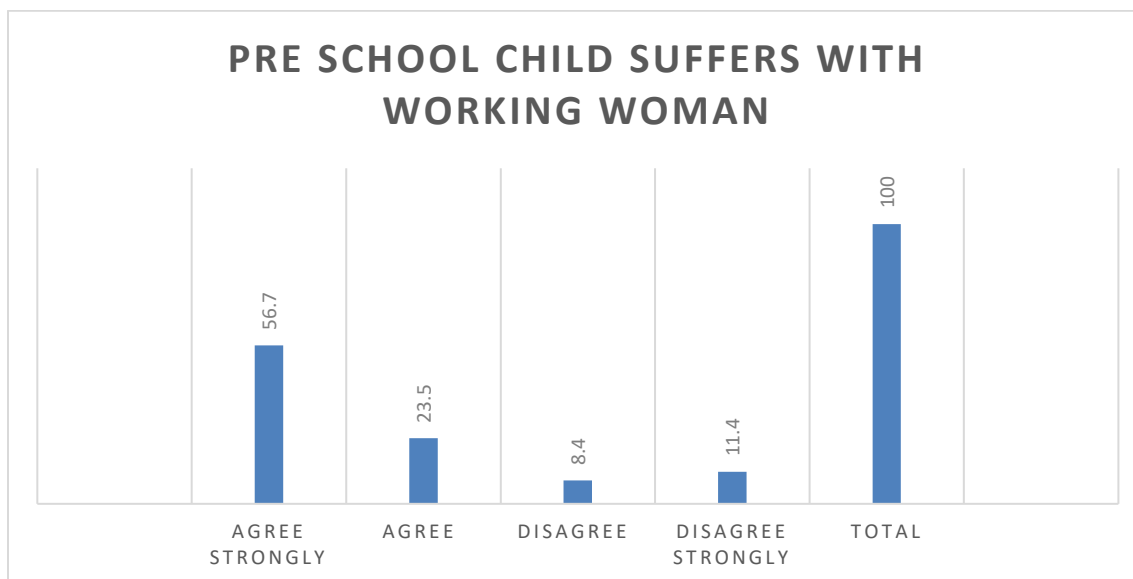


Figure 3: Pre-school children suffer with working women

In figure 3 the results show that 56% respondents believe that pre-school child suffers with working woman and 23% respondents are agree while 8% are disagree and 11% are strongly disagree. The

present results reveal that majority of the Pakistani population do not support to the working women.

Table 3: Regression Model-Sexism and education

Variables	β	R ²
Pre-school child suffers	-.066	.004
University is more important for boys	.057	.003
Men should have more right to do job	.020	0.00

In table 3 the regression model is presented in which sexism is dependent variable and education is independent variable. Regression analysis for pre-school child suffers with working

woman shows the value (β -.066), university is more important for boys shows the value (β .057) and men should have more right to do a job shows the value (β .020) which represent sexism in Pakistan

Table 4: Regression Model-Sexism and income

Variables	β	R ²
Pre-school child suffers	.011	.105
University is more important for boys	.040	.002
Men should have more right to do job	.135	0.18

In table 4 regression model for sexism and income is presented in which sexism is dependent variable and income is independent variable. Regression analysis for pre-school child suffers with working woman shows the value (β .011), university is more important for boys shows the value (β .040) and men should have more right to do a job shows the value (β .135) which represent sexism in Pakistan.

5.2 Correlation between Sexism, Education and Income

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Coefficients between study variables education and sexism (N= 1995)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Pre-schoolchild suffers	1				
Men have more right to do job	.252**	1			
University is more important for boys	-.195**	.225**	1		
education	-.053**	.026	.064**	1	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Secondary data extracted from the World Value Survey, 7th Wave

In table 5 the analysis shows there is positive and negative correlation between the variables and it shows that correlation is significant between the variables.

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Coefficients between study variables income and sexism (N= 1995)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Pre-schoolchild suffers	1				
Men have more right to do job	.252**	1			
University is more important for boys	-.195**	.225**	1		
education	.105**	.135**	.040*		1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Secondary data extracted from the World Value Survey, 7th Wave

In table 6 the analysis shows there is positive and negative correlation between the variables and it shows that correlation is significant between the variables.

6. Discussion

This study attempted to use secondary data to report findings related to gender discrimination in Pakistan, in context to education and employment. Secondary data from WVS-seventh wave was used. This data was collected between the time period 2017-2020. Overall, we find that Pakistani society still discriminates against women with regard to equal opportunities for education and participation in paid employment. Our findings show that sexism is prominent in Pakistan. This study has the following findings and results. The general population of Pakistan does support the male that they have more right to do a job. Pakistani society is a male-centric society and women are financially dependent on men, society does not promote the idea of financial independence of women. Pakistani general public believes that women have more

responsibilities to take care of their children and homes, so if women do jobs it has a direct impact on their children and family lives. So the majority of the population does not support women to do a job. They consider that pre-school child suffer when the mother is a working woman. The majority of the people are in favor that university education is important for boys than the girls. They believe that male is the head of the house and needs a good salary and a good job so a university education is more important for boys. Women are limited to the house chores and their basic and main responsibility is to maintain the homes in Pakistan. Gender is a social construct (Patimah et al., 2021) because of this, gender-based attitudes promote beliefs about gender roles. Most importantly, they are evolving socially and traditionally over time. for example, the concept about the male as the "head of the

family male provides financial support for the family (Habiba et al., 2016), and the woman is expected to stay at home caring for the children. This behavior is also old-fashioned, which can seriously damage mental health. Women are the biggest victims of this form of gender discrimination and they are facing different types of violence and discrimination (Ali et al., 2020). It is normal for them to hear comments of abuse from any workers or anyone else. While receiving compliments may seem flattering, many women are afraid to walk on certain roads or be alone on them. It is painful and sometimes violent. This research provides knowledge about sexism in Pakistan. Quantitative analysis and empirical results support the hypothesis that a low level of education gives rise to sexism in Pakistan (Hussain et al., 2020). Gender division of labor and responsibilities for domestic welfare leaves women with a disproportionate burden. The Pakistani culture is not in the favor of protecting women's rights but the legal sector provides a complete framework to protect them from sexual harassment, sexual discrimination, very common in rural areas where girls are given the gift of alternative household chores and early marriages. Women have a small share in the labor market they are considered a burden on the household economy. Women's freedom is based on economic freedom. Women can be free from economic dependence on men but in the current system, women cannot get economic freedom. Nowadays girls are getting an education in school, college, and university and also doing jobs, but despite all this, the smell of difference

and sexism (Deeba, 2021) but without cultural support, women can't get legal protections. The proportion of women in the total population of Pakistan is about 52%, but practically very limited numbers of women are playing their role in the development of society alongside men in practical life which increases the chances of domestic violence (Amir-ud-Din & Abbas, 2020). The education of females plays important role in the development of society and it cannot be ignored by society. In the case of Pakistan where limited opportunities are provided to females has slowed down the progress of society (Afzal et al., 2021). The living conditions and social attitudes of women in Pakistan is no secret. The existing literature and this study tell us about the education of women that the majority of Pakistanis believe that the position of men and women in society is different. The majority of girls from low-income families have never attended schools; these families prefer boys' education and the majority of boys from these families have attended school. And this trend is can be smelled in the air. The existing literature and researches support this study that women do not have equal opportunities and equal rights in Pakistan. They are limited to the homes and it is considered by the society that their basic responsibilities are to maintain the homes and to raise the children.

7. Limitation of the Research

This research is limited to sexism in Pakistan and there was a total of 1995 respondents from the country representing sexism and Pakistan. The

study is limited to the education and employment of women and their status in the country.

8. Conclusion

This study provides evidence that masculine society does not support working women and they think that if a woman does a job then her children suffer it means that society believes that children are the responsibility of women only. This study also reveals that patriarchal society believes that men have more rights to get a university education and society believes that a university education is a right for males because men have to do a good job for the family. The

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