
Challenge of Gender Discrimination: A review of Sociological Literature

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ABSTRACT

Gender discrimination remains a pervasive and deeply rooted issue in societies worldwide, with significant implications for social justice and equality. This research paper presents a comprehensive review of the sociological literature on the challenge of gender discrimination, aiming to provide a nuanced understanding of its multifaceted nature and the evolving strategies employed to address it.

Drawing upon an extensive range of sociological studies, this review examines the historical context and societal factors that contribute to gender discrimination. It delves into the structural, institutional, and cultural dimensions of gender bias, shedding light on the complex interplay of power, privilege, and social norms that perpetuate unequal treatment.

Furthermore, the paper explores the enduring consequences of gender discrimination on individuals, communities, and societies at large, including disparities in education, employment, healthcare, and political representation. It also highlights the intersectionality of gender discrimination, acknowledging how race, class, sexual orientation, and other social factors intersect to compound inequality.

In addressing the challenge of gender discrimination, the review synthesizes current research on the strategies and interventions employed to combat this pervasive issue. It critically evaluates the effectiveness of policies, legal frameworks, and grassroots movements, while also exploring the role of education, media, and public awareness campaigns in challenging societal attitudes and norms.

This research paper contributes to the ongoing discourse on gender discrimination by providing a comprehensive overview of sociological insights and by offering recommendations for future research and policy initiatives. It underscores the urgent need for a multifaceted approach that addresses both the structural and cultural underpinnings of gender discrimination in order to foster a more equitable and inclusive society.

Keywords: Gender Discrimination, Sociological Literature, Gender Inequality, Societal Challenges, Gender Equality

Introduction

As the gender gap widened in 1998, Pakistan was ranked 120th out of 146 countries for gender development, while it was ranked 92nd out of 94th for Gender Empowerment Measurement Ranking (UNDP report 1998).

A thorough review of the literature requires due to the size of the subject of study. Several studies from throughout the world were carefully reviewed to build the foundation for the current research. Here are a few pertinent liter reviews.

Families are hesitant to enroll their daughters in school to provide them with a more formal educational experience. They reasoned that daughters were only useful for reproduction, housework, and agricultural work. It's assumed that there's nothing in it for you in the long run. As a result, sons tend to be favored above daughters. (Sonalde Desai 1994).

When it comes to fundamental biological necessities like food, clothing, and shelter, girls in India have a shorter lifetime than boys because they are more likely to engage in risky behaviours such as indulging in fatal diseases, being neglected by their families, or receiving inadequate medical attention. Following Kalyani Menon Sen et al. (2001).

As a result of gender discrimination, women have been deprived of using their abilities in society. It is why the country's economy suffers due to the lack of female participation in all fields of business due to gender discrimination.

When it comes to gaining access to decision-making processes and finding work in the market, women face challenges due to a variety of factors including poverty, gender inequality, and a lack of education. Even while the state and other stakeholders have attempted to empower women, they have failed to address all of the previously mentioned pressing challenges to fulfill the required international standard goals. In the words of XariJalil (2018a),

There is a lot of effort being made in Pakistan to address the issues of gender disparity by passing new laws to address violence against women and child marriage restraints. But even though these laws have been passed, their implementation is still being questioned by law enforcement officials due to deeply-rooted feudal customs and culture and conflicting religious injunctions. As a result, all of the above laws are viewed as questionable by the public. In the words of i.a. Rehman (2017)

As mentioned above, education is critical to the development of human resources, especially for the advancement of the status of minor girls; however, it is not only required but also an important fundamental right in the country of India, where Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) has been implemented since 1950 and has had a positive impact on women's well-being due to women's role as the main pillar of family responsibilities. A.P. Pandey, 2002

However, wealth gender gap has a greater impact on gender gap because poor girls in Africa have greater disadvantages in getting an education than girls from wealthy families. As a result, educational inequalities have risen, even though the poorest girls would have been encouraged to enroll because of the potential benefits of doing so. The study reveals that inequalities have occurred due to gender gaps and wealth gaps as well. (Filmer, D. 2005).

Brahman and Chatri family females have been married against their will, and the relationship turns violent when they refuse. As a result, they have been abused and tortured, as even newlywed brides cannot eat what their husbands want in these households.

According to Erik et al. (2006), Sweden's sticky floor and glass ceiling effects discriminate against women. According to their findings, women in Sweden are more likely to experience health problems due to slipping on sticky floors than from glass ceilings. According to their findings, women who have young children suffer the greatest barriers to advancement in their careers. Women of younger and older ages face a greater gender penalty than women of middle age. As a result of this investigation, they could find no evidence suggesting women in the private sector have fewer job options than men in the public sector. The logical bias theory of workplace gender discrimination has been studied by Susan et al (1998). Discrimination is permissible if decision makers feel that their superiors or others in positions of authority expect or favour it. It is the theory. According to their findings, businesspeople discriminate against women, and those at the top of the company are more likely than those at the bottom to hold such views. Their research also indicated that management encourages prejudice, albeit the levels of discrimination were lower than in previous studies, indicating greater equality of opportunity for all employees.

Furthermore, their findings indicated that discrimination is caused more by external factors than by societal norms. Bangladesh's public administration has been researched by Habib (2000) for its implications on the country's

brick wall and glass ceiling. According to his findings, women in Bangladesh's civil service face discrimination at every level, from entry-level positions up to the top (Glass Ceiling). Social and cultural considerations are the biggest roadblocks for women seeking careers in government. The hurdles to their professional journey stemmed from both systemic and attitudinal factors. The laws and restrictions put in place by the government have proven unsuccessful in this regard. Discrimination, on the other hand, did not apply to women from the upper classes. This unequal treatment of men and women impacted the morale, motivation, and productivity of women. Uzma (2004) discovered that culture, environment, and parents all have a role in shaping one's identity. Both you and others have an impact on how you see yourself. The way parents treat their children helps shape who they become. Parents frequently view daughters as weak, timid, and overly reliant on males for their protection. As a result, ladies are unable to make suggestions or voice their displeasure. Suppression and subjugation begin here. Even educated women, according to her, have two selves: a professional one and a personal one. She also discovered that women's income is seen as a supplement to that of their husbands, rather than the family's primary financial source. She also discovered that these findings did not apply to upper-class homes, where women enjoy unrestricted freedom.

Discrimination means treating someone unfairly because of their gender, race, or other characteristics. Equally as an obstruction to equality, growth, and peace, it is seen as a hindrance. For women throughout the world, discrimination is widely recognised as a kind of inequality and a problem. As a result, it has detrimental psychological effects on women's ability to fully engage in society. It is estimated that women make about half of the global population, and a sizable part of them are still subjected to discrimination at various points in their lives, whether directly or indirectly. Discrimination against women is prevalent around the world, in all religions, countries, and groups. Christians take their male children into a special room of the church during their naming ceremony but their female children aren't. In temples and churches, women should not be priests or fathers, as indicated by Waltke's research. Ancient Jews prayed every morning, "Thank you Lord that I was not born a woman." Gender inequality has only gotten worse with the advancement of science and technology, which can already tell what gender a foetus will be when it grows up. Seventy-eight thousand so-called female babies were terminated in Mumbai between 1978 and 1983. (Bastola, 2007). Nepal, a predominantly male nation, is not unique in its treatment of women. Nepali discrimination against women has roots in the country's

traditional culture, which creates a social hierarchy between males and women. It's a cultural practise that women accept and males apply as a societal value: discrimination. As a result of Nepal's religious tradition and male predominance, women are viewed as second-class citizens.

Almost everywhere, people prefer to have a male born instead of a daughter. Discrimination based on gender takes many forms and begins as soon as a person is born and continues throughout their entire lives. "Chhora pae" means "goat," and the phrase means "pumpkin" when translated into Nepali. If a woman gives birth to both boys and girls, she will receive goat and pumpkin as food due to her labor. Boys and girls have different sets of behaviors they should display. Through this discrimination, men and women have been placed in an unequal social position. Numerous inflexible gender norms have been created that limit women's chances and slow their growth in the private and public spheres. Discrimination against women comes in many forms, and it varies by ethnicity, according to researchers. The Brahmin and Chhetri communities are the most at risk because of their members' prevalence of early marriage. Traditionally, girls from Brahmin and Chhetri families have been pressured into marriage early (Luitel, 1992).

Similarly, women are restricted in their movements and freedom of speech, which can escalate into violence. A woman was reportedly assaulted and had a paste of chilli powder and garlic injected into her vagina as punishment for talking to two guys (The Kathmandu Post, 2007). According to Adhikari (2007), newlywed brides are not allowed to eat anything they want during the day because they are not permitted to move about, and if they do, they will have to walk outside to defecate, and men would see their faces. In Nepal, there is also gender-based educational discrimination. Women in Nepal have much lower adult literacy and schooling levels than men (HMG/N, 2002). Many people believe that girls do not require an education.

On the other hand, according to Pandey (2006), more women (40 percent) than men (30 percent) believe that girls' education is important, hence a higher percentage of boys (50 percent) are given the chance to go to boarding school, compared to girls (50 percent) (10 percent). Most Madheshi women believe that girls should spend time doing household tasks after marriage and so do not want to send their daughters to college. After marriage, some women in the Madheshi society were pressured by their husbands and mothers-in-law to stop their jobs since they needed to move about a lot and contact all types of people (Mandal, 2007). Discrimination against girls in rural Nepal is a long-standing practice, with parents making decisions about

family finances, property rights, and the cost of school, food, and health care for girls compared to males (Bhadra 2002). When it comes to official meetings and the planning process, women in rural areas are often overlooked because of their perceived lack of education. Because of illiteracy, women face discrimination in formal meetings and political involvement (Pandey, 2006). Due to a lack of education and awareness, women are underrepresented in the community forestry planning and decision-making processes (Shrestha 2004). Workloads, in addition to schooling, reduce the availability of women to attend meetings. Women are less likely to attend extra meetings or social events where knowledge can be given because of household duties (Bhattarai, 2006).

Research Gap

Gender role-related cultural norms offer a critical theoretical perspective on gender inequality explanations. Men and women have different social behavioural expectations because of socially imposed gender roles and standards (Eagly 1987; Gutek et al. 1991; Gutek et al. 1992; Gutek et al. 1993). Gender stereotypes and conventional cultural norms work together to bind women to family duties, where society expects women to focus on housekeeping or traditional feminine vocations and master associated skills. Men are expected to contribute financially to their families and to enhance their access to market resources. There is an economic gap between men and women due to cultural gender values encouraging men and women to invest in distinct areas of human capital, resulting in variations in capability and a cultural gender value that emphasises conventional gender roles. This set of cultural beliefs has been subtly incorporated into children's socialisation, assimilated, and passed down from father to son over the years. Because of the unconscious application of these cultural ideas, gender roles and gender structures are reinforced and reproduced (Eagly and Wood 1999).

Similar claims have been made in economic studies on the utility analysis of identification. Identity and self-image directly impact individual utility, as individuals' belonging to social categories (not limited to gender) and recognition of group behavioral norms serve as their motivation bases for daily life and social interactions, according to Akerlof and Kranton (2000). They drew on sociological and psychological concepts. Going against the grain of the herd can lead to discrimination, punishment, and even exclusion. Men and women have different role expectations and behavioral norms, and this difference helps sustain and deepen gender identification by promoting convergence and rejecting variability. Gender is a fundamental social category. Gender identity, then, directly bears how people behave and how they fare on the job market. Research shows that gender role beliefs are

socio-cultural and have an impact on gender structures. Much research shows the negative impact gender role beliefs have on income, particularly for women's incomes. For example, Corrigan and Konrad (2007) found that traditional gender role attitudes held by teenagers reduce women's working hours and hourly wage rates in paid jobs, but do not have a significant impact on men's working hours and incomes when studying tracing data on American high school students. White men's income is unrelated to gender role attitudes, even though ethnic identities moderate gender role attitudes' influence on income; as a result, traditional gender role attitudes are more detrimental to white women (or white mothers) in terms of their income than black women (mothers) (Christie-Mizell 2006; Christie-Mizell et al. 2007). It's important to note that Stickney and Konard (2007) use social survey data from 28 nations and regions to empirically validate the universality of the link between traditional gender role attitudes and poor income among women. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth in the United States from 1979 to 2004 shows a negative relationship between traditional gender role attitudes and women's salaries. Still, a favourable relationship is discovered by Judge and Livingston (2008). Because of this, traditional gender roles have the potential to exacerbate the gap between men and women's incomes. Even though the vast majority of this research has been carried out in Western countries, the theoretical arguments can logically be applied to Chinese society. Thoughts like "man is superior to woman" and the ontology of Yin and Yang in Chinese traditional culture create gender relations that permeate all of these other domains. However, since the May Fourth New Culture Movement, Pakistan has also launched top-to-bottom multidimensional and instrumental women's liberation activities to unprecedentedly remould traditional gender cultures. Gender distinctions have been smoothed or obscured by "de-gendering" tactics, particularly in the 1950s, which focused on equality for women based on "social obligations and contributions." New types of gender inequality were caused by these developments, particularly in the household, where conventional gendered labour divisions and patriarchal cultural traits had been retained for generations (Song 2012; Zuo 2005). With the abolishment of the unit welfare system and the fall of official gender equality organisations, "tradition restoration" has been noticed in gender role attitudes and gendered divisions of work during the country's reform and opening-up process and market transition. Therefore, empirical study on Chinese society confirms that traditional gender culture strongly influences both the public and private sectors in the country. The gendered division of chores, for example, has been proven to be significantly affected by gender role attitudes (Tong and Liu 2015; Yang 2014). Due to societal norms, women are more likely to

engage in "gender performance," where their relative financial status rises as the amount of time they spend doing housework increases (Liu et al. 2015). Traditional gender roles, on the other hand, have little effect on men's labor force participation, while discouraging and repressing women's labor force involvement" (Qing 2017). Gender equality in today's society makes it easier for women to advance in their careers. To summarize, there is a possible link between the gender pay disparity and attitudes toward gender roles. Culture has also remained prominent in Pakistan's transitional period despite changes in the political system. Based on it, the author of this research creates an analytical framework for examining the impact of gender role attitudes on individual wages and the mechanisms by which those attitudes have an impact. Studies on gender inequality in Pakistan's specific social environment are supplemented and developed by focusing on the economic disparity between men and women when traditional Chinese gender role beliefs are restored.

Conceptual Framework

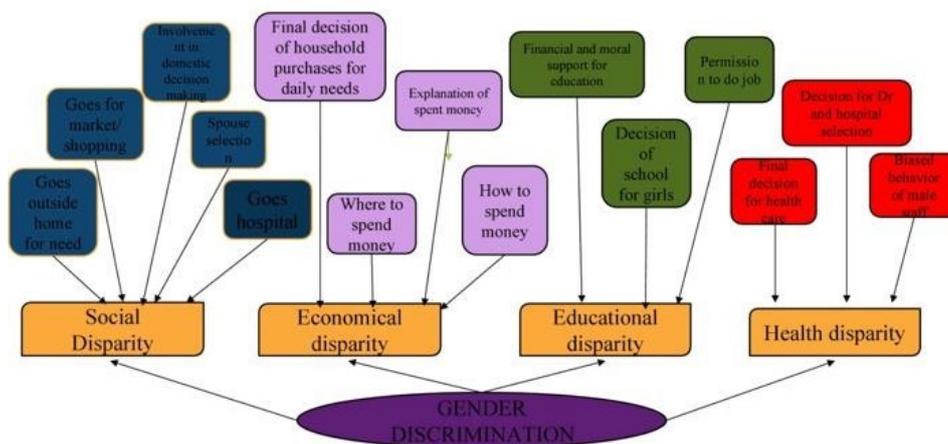


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of gender discrimination

Figure 2 shows the conceptual framework of gender discrimination, Women's and men's mental and physical health are adversely affected by gender inequality throughout the world. Health care access can be restricted, ill health rates can rise, and life expectancy can be shortened due to this policy. Even if it is true that women live longer lives on average than males, they also suffer from higher rates of ill health throughout their lives.

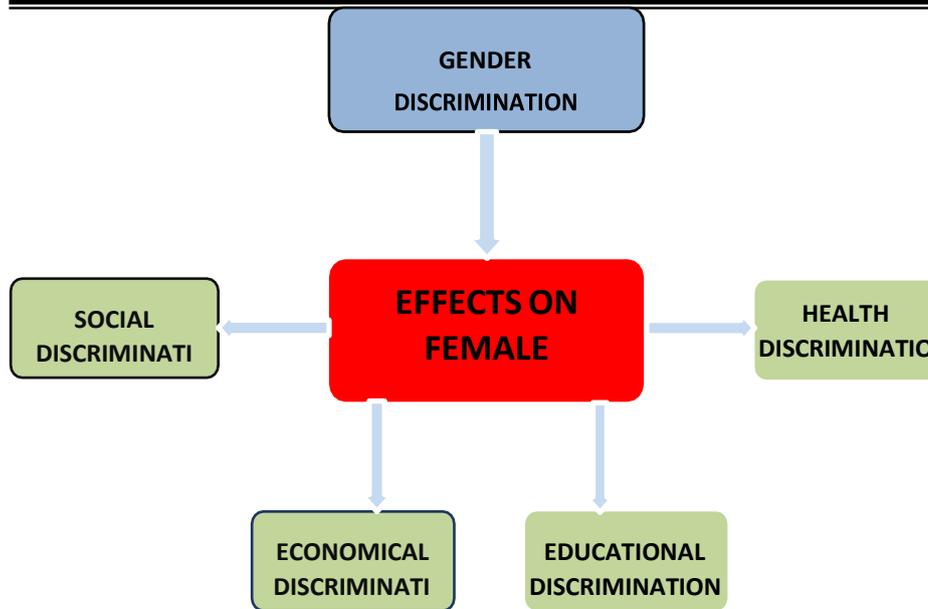


Figure 2 Effects on Female due to Gender Discrimination

To put it another way, gender role attitudes formed in early stages of life have an impact on not only career choices and incomes in the labour market, but also traditional explanatory factors of the gender income gap such as educational attainment, participation in the labour force, and time spent at work and with family. Because of this, Firestone et al. (1999) assert that when human capital and other variables are controlled in the model, the direct consequences of gender role attitudes on income do not accurately reflect the full range of their effects. Therefore, introducing new variables would not help us understand the influence of social cultural elements such as gender role attitudes on the income disparity between men and women. Judge and Livingston (2008) developed an analytical framework for mediating mechanisms of job choice, which is further developed in this research. Figure below elaborates the correlation between negative and positive factors effected on female gender discrimination:

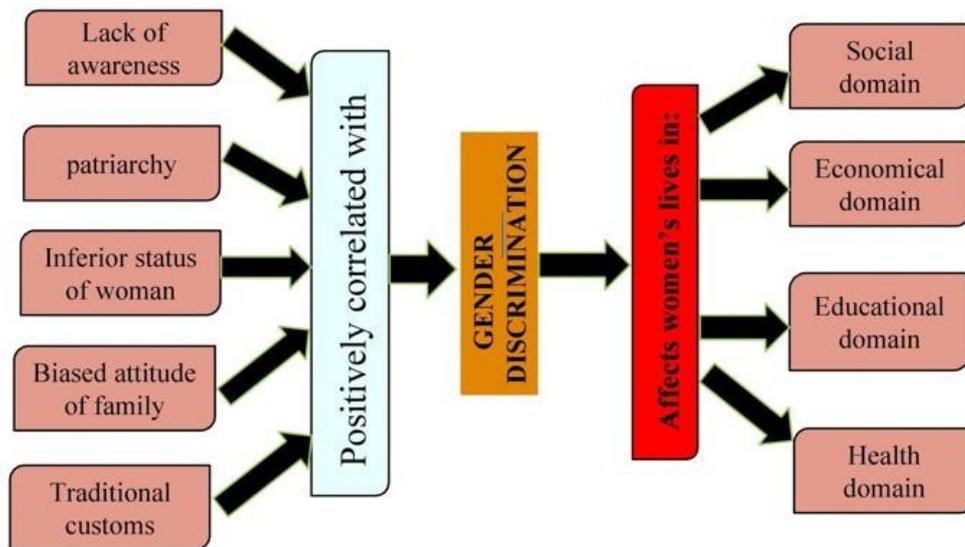


Figure 3 Correlation

Conclusion

In conclusion, the review of sociological literature on the challenge of gender discrimination reveals the pervasive and deeply rooted nature of this issue in societies worldwide. Our analysis has highlighted the multifaceted dimensions of gender bias, encompassing structural, institutional, and cultural factors, as well as the intersectionality of discrimination, which compounds its effects for marginalized individuals.

Furthermore, this review underscores the far-reaching consequences of gender discrimination, affecting various aspects of individuals' lives, including education, employment, healthcare, and political representation. It is evident that addressing gender discrimination is not only a matter of social justice but also essential for achieving equality and sustainable development. While progress has been made in addressing gender discrimination through policies, legal frameworks, and social movements, our review also reveals the persistence of challenges and the need for ongoing efforts. Education, media, and public awareness campaigns play vital roles in challenging deeply ingrained societal attitudes and norms, which are essential for long-term change.

As we move forward, it is clear that a multifaceted approach is required to tackle gender discrimination comprehensively. This includes addressing not only the structural inequalities but also the cultural and psychological aspects that perpetuate discrimination. Collaborative efforts among

policymakers, activists, scholars, and the wider public are crucial to making meaningful strides toward a more equitable and inclusive society.

This research paper serves as a foundational resource for scholars, policymakers, and advocates working to understand and combat gender discrimination. By synthesizing and critically evaluating the sociological literature, it contributes to our collective knowledge and underscores the imperative of continued research and action in the pursuit of gender equality. Ultimately, the challenge of gender discrimination can and must be met with determination, empathy, and a commitment to justice for all.

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