



ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

A Sociological Analysis of Employment Discrimination Against Women in Pakistan

Shabana Muhammad Anwar^{1*}, QurratulAin Sardar², Anam Aqil Khan³

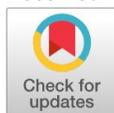
^{1,3} Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University Quetta, Quetta, Pakistan

² Government College University Hyderabad, Hyderabad, Pakistan

Abstract— In Pakistan, women treat not equally as a man in every stage of life. The patriarchal system of Pakistan retains women behindhand the man and generates inequalities to have equal social and economic opportunities of life enjoyment for the woman. A healthier lifestyle depends on the earning status of an individual. Without earning, the maintenance of the lifecycle cannot be possible. Pakistan is an underdeveloped country the half proportion of the population consists of women. Women's participation in the labor force can improve the economy of the country and perform an active role in finishing poverty in Pakistan. The current study has been conducted from Balochistan, the most backward province of Pakistan. The people of Balochistan have strict cultural values and a tribal system, where the best place for women to stay is around the four walls of the home. They are not allowed to work outside the home. The number of working women is less as compared to men in the formal sector. The research aims to highlight the problems of women's employment due to male dominancy at the workplace. The nature of the study is quantitative; the area of study is higher educational institutes of Quetta Balochistan. Through simple random sampling, 500 respondents were selected. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire. The hypothetical statement was tested by the chi-square test. The p-value of the chi-square is lesser than 0.05. The results of the study show that due to the male-dominancy women do not have equal opportunities of selection at the workplace. The males' strong positions in the labor market create hurdles regarding women's employment. This study will be helpful for economists, the social welfare department, women development programs, different NGOs working for women's development to introduce policies for women's employment.

Index Terms— Unemployment, Opportunities of appointment, Male dominancy, Cultural values

Received: 10 October 2021; **Accepted:** 11 December 2021; **Published:** 22 January 2022



Introduction

Work is obligatory for the comfort of the country and an individual. Sources of income improve the lifestyle of anyone. It delivers excellence of life not only to the earner but recovers to the life of other people as well. Employment is a bridge of development. Women in every era have been neglected to participate in economic and social activities. Their contribution to the labor market leftovers undetermined because of fewer opportunities for development for women. The social and cultural values continuously remain serious issues for them to perform in the economic sector. The Discriminatory environment against women in the labor market ceremonial origin of fewer chances of appointment and low income. Women are deprived of their fundamental rights. In Pakistan, women are far away from all opportunities

*Email: zaibshabana@gmail.com

for well-being. Although women are half of the total population of Pakistan, they have one-fourth of participation in overall economic activities (Sarwar & Abbasi 2013).

The status of women is heterogeneous in Pakistan due to gender inequality. Discrimination against women exists in society, it is the result of the tribal and feudal system of Pakistan, which keeps women deprived of all socioeconomic benefits. Gender assigns the duties of men and women in society. Patriarchal values are rooted in the social system and affect the roles of gender. Division of labor depends on sexual differences between men and women. The women reproductive roles bound them to perform the responsibilities of the household as mother and wife. On the other side, the productive roles of men present them as bread earners (Bari, 2000).

This situation leads to discriminatory behavior towards women. Disparity against women starts with the birth of a baby girl. Families and society do not want to capitalize on women. Restrictions to stay at home for women are the result of their economic dependence on men. Women have no access to health facilities, opportunities of getting an education, participation in economic activities, power of decisions making, and share in inheritance. This condition increases poverty, and women suffer more than men in society. Men in the rural and tribal system have a stronger authoritative position over women, where women have fewer opportunities for equality in their life (Bari, 2000).

As in the above, paragraph women are half of the total population of Pakistan; this strength can significantly increase the economy of Pakistan. Unfortunately, women have no platform for their career development. Two characteristics activate behind the less participation of women in the workforce: firstly, women do not want to do the job outside the home. Secondly, many jobs are not appropriate for women to apply for those occupations. In the first situation, women have no awareness to take part in economic activities. The 2nd situation presents the authority and preference of organizations. The women's involvement in the labor force is just 13.29 million in Pakistan out of 57.24 million of the total labor force. Although the majority of females in Pakistan are engaged in informal economic activities, which are not paid (Shaheen, et al., 2015).

Socio-cultural values create problems for women to have access to their career advancement. The regime of Pakistan introduced many policies related to women's empowerment, but still, women have no equal chances of employment in the formal sector of the labor market. To have a strong economic system there must be fair opportunities for employment for women (Isran & Ali Isran, 2012).

Discrimination against women in hiring in the labor market affects their career and future development. The equal quota for men and women can increase women's empowerment (Xiao, 2021; Amano-Patino, et al., 2020). Pakistan is ranked at the bottom internationally regarding gender-based equality. Deep-rooted social norms regard women as subjugated to men. Women have poorer health, education, and political representation in a patriarchal society. In the same mood, women lack access to paid employment and decent jobs too (Majid & Siegmann, 2021; Faridi, Chaudhry, & Anwar, 2009).

In Pakistan, women are primarily concerned with domestic works. The male members of families do not allow them to work outside the home due to cultural and social norms. Approximately 40% of women remain at home, and 15% do not agree to work outside as men (Tanaka & Muzones, 2016). Women are suffering from market discrimination, they are appointed for low-status and low-paid jobs as compared to men. One of the visions of sustainable development is to eliminate gender discrimination in 2025, and Pakistan is a signatory country of that program. The situation of earning in Pakistan is worst. Pakistan's average income was 1461 USD in 2017. Pakistan is considered by extensive gender gaps and devaluation of women in the aspects of health, education, and labor market profits (Siegmann & Majid, 2021).

There is an imbalance situation of women's education to employment in Pakistan. The ratio of female workers is 23% informal job sector while the males' ratio is 77%. This ratio of female workers indicated that 70% of educated women are unemployed in Pakistan (empowerpk.org, 2014). Half of Pakistan's population consists of women, but they do not have admirable status. The condition of women who live in rural areas their social status is more miserable. They kept socially and economically backward (Panhwar, Abro, Khawaja, Siddiqui, & Farshad, 2017).

Women's participation is lower in the labor market. The patriarchal values of Pakistan restrict them to stay behind the four walls of the home. According to social values, the responsibilities of women are to perform household duties. Raring and bearing children is the priority of women, do care of family members. On the other side, males are earners of the family. This conceptual framework does not allow women to work outside the home and perform in the economic sector. Current research aims to investigate the employment discrimination against women in the workplace.

To highlight the male dominancy at the workplace, which creates problems for women to be appointed for the jobs. Furthermore, the study explores the chances of employment for women in the workplace. The conducted research will be helpful for NGOs who work for women's development. The study will provide knowledge to the provincial and federal governments to make better policies regarding women's employment. The current study will provide information to social workers and economists regarding the economic status of women.

Research Objectives

The objective of the study is to evaluate the opportunities of appointment of women in the male-subjugated workforce.

Hypothesis of the Study

The hypothesis of the study is that employment opportunities of women are likely to be related to male's dominance at the workplace.

Literature Review

Martin and Barnard discussed, that women face several hurdles in the male-dominated workplace more than the gender-balanced workplace. Male's authoritative positions create a tense environment against women. Traditional Gender hierarchies stop women to participate in the labor market and make males' existence strong in the workplace. Assigned gender roles of men and women in society affect the terms and conditions related to the selection of employees in any organization and present male-dominated culture. Organizational structure supports male superiority that gives empowerment to males rather than the female employees (Martin & Barnard, 201; Powell & Sang, 2015). In society, every individual must be having equal opportunities of appointment without gender discrimination who have skills and knowledge related to their field. The employees of organizations are pillars to increase the economic growth of the nation and achieve the goals of millennium development to reduce poverty. Having jobs is not only developing the sense of self-esteem of a person, but also the source of providing a better lifestyle. Therefore, the organizations must introduce policies without gender discrimination. Furthermore, it has proved if women have stable sources of income, that benefits to improve the condition of household and country. According to the report of (ILO, 2013) the ratio of female unemployment is increased from 75.8 million to 82.7 million in 2007. This condition leads to a global economic crisis (International Labour Office, 2014).

The gender pays gap and economic injustice against women in the workplace exist in the world. Women are not likely to prefer male-dominated occupations. They are considered less skillful than male employees. Women at the workplace represent a minority group. An individual who belongs to a minority group face a non-supportive workplace environment (Cifre, et al., 2015; Adeeba, et al., 2021). There is a common concept in the workplace that men have organizational management skills than female workers. Personal professional skills are more valued than traditional values of society for organizations. Women in society, known as having soft skills, which affect the career path of working women in a male-dominated workplace. Women's soft skills are a plus point for them to achieve career development at the workplace (Kato & Kodama, 2017).

Many factors actively work to raise gender discrimination against women in the workplace. Cultural prejudices, gender stereotype perceptions present women as they are not capable of high positions. Many studies have declared, women are neglected to select for high ranks. Organizations think that men workers are more competent and skillful than women (Zenger & Folkman, 2019). Men and women have perceived the different sets of the work. So, they treat differently. Women are considered subordinate to men. The theory of division of labor described the men as the breadwinner of society, and women stayed at home to fulfill the responsibilities of the house. Furthermore, women have no access to have a good education, health facilities, and power of decision making. In Pakistan, women face hurdles due to religious, traditional, and cultural values. Due to the poverty and inflation in Pakistan, women who neglect to get an education cannot work outside the door. The ratio of illiteracy is high among women however, the women who are educated performing their role in the labor force (Sadaquat, 2011; Abdullah, Shoukat & Chaudhary, 2021).

Generally, the Labor market is predominated by males. The women in Pakistan have no equal opportunities for employment due to the educational disparity against women. Families are not interested in investing in women's education. There are fewer chances for women to get higher, technical, and job-oriented education (Nasir et al., 2020). In the workplace, unequal distribution of power generates gender inequalities. Male-dominated unions put down the professional skills of working women and play a role to support male domination in the workplace. Male superiority creates invisible barriers regarding women employment (ILO, 2020).

In the present time, the trade unions have converted from being male-dominated to a majority. Trade unions at the workplace provide organizational benefits to male workers (Bryson et al., 2020). Observance the problems of women in the workplace the human resource management should revitalize the strategies regarding women's employment. Flexibility in working hours can lead working women towards job satisfaction, healthier organizational performance, and skilled growth (Davidescu et al., 2020). As women have household responsibilities and rigid work schedules demotivate them to apply for different positions (Jacobs & Schain, 2009; Sistiani & Prajawati, 2021).

Selection of the worker on merits can improve the performance of organizations. Meritocratic recruitments are not well established in the patriarchal system (Cortazar, et al., 2016). Recruitment of the right person for the right place is known as selection on merit. Appointment on merit means every individual has a 100% chance of selecting who is eligible for announced posts in the public sector. Perhaps no organization has a spotless merit system of selection. Many organizations used the quota system, where women have fewer

seats for appointments as compared to males. Preference to homogeneous groups (own staff) by organizations is discrimination. The Appointments should be on merit and uncontaminated (McCourt, 2000).

Research Methodology

Research methodology is the scientific procedure to collect data regarding social phenomena. The current study was conducted about the employment opportunities for women in the male-subjugated workplace. The sample of the research was selected from universities and educational directorates of Quetta (Balochistan). The 500 respondents were designated through simple random sampling because the study is quantitative. A 5 Likert scales structured questionnaire was distributed to collect data from a particular area of the research. The SPSS ((statistical package of social sciences) version 24 was used to test the hypothesis of the study. The chi-square test was applied to know the association between opportunities for women's employment and male dominance. The p-value of the chi-square is lesser than 0.05. The result of the present study shows that the alternate hypothesis is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Data Analysis and Results

After conducting the facts from a nominated sample of the study, the researcher presented the information in systemize method about the gathered information relevant to the topic under discussion.

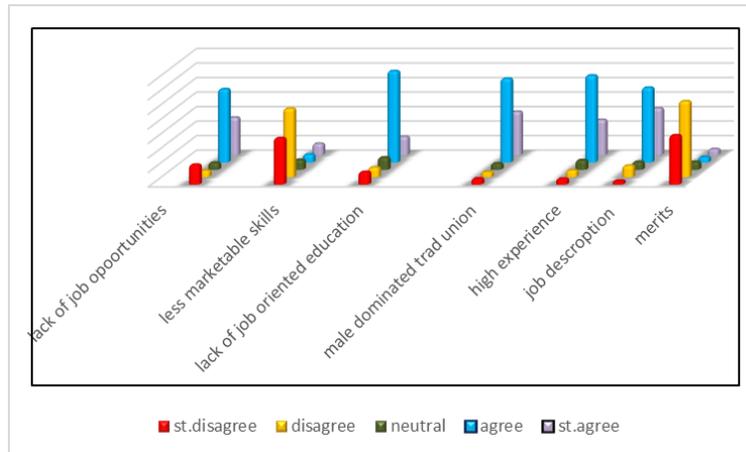


Fig. 1. Graphical presentation of participants' Response

Table I
Chi-square test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1432.265 ^a	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	963.275	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.932	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	500		

The fig 1 in above table I show a strong association between women's employment and male subjugation at the workplace. Working women at the workplace have fewer chances of hiring due to the stronghold of males in the labor market. Organizations prefer to select male employees rather than female workers. The p-value of chi-square is .000 it means the alternate hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Job discrimination against women is a universal phenomenon. In patriarchal societies, an educated woman cannot participate in economic activities easily. The question asked from a particular sample of the study there is a lack of appointments for women in your organizations, the high proportioned 50.60% respondents agreed with the given statement while, 26% strongly agreed that there are fewer chances of hiring at their organizations, several researchers show the same scenario (Martin & Barnard, 2013; Powell & Sang, 2015; ILO, 2013; International Labour Office, 2014).

Women at the workplace present less competent than men. The Gender stereotype perceptions present the women that they are emotional and physically weak to maintain managerial positions at the workplace. The asked question from working women at the workplace that they have fewer skills of management than men, 47% sample of the research disagreed, whereas 32% strongly disagreed. The previous studies (Cifre, et al., 2015; Adeeba, et al., 2021; Kato & Kodama, 2017; Zenger & Folkman, 2019). Observations of earlier researches indicate, women always neglected to have rights in life. They do not have equal access to quality education, health facilities, power of decision-making regarding their life. Families do not consider treating women as equal to men. Women with poor education or without education are not able to spend independent life. The women who have education did not get career oriented-education, because most of the professions occupied by the males of the society (Sadaquat, 2011; Nasir, et al., 2020; Abdullah, Shoukat & Chaudhary, 2021). Thus the results of the current study show the same picture 63% of respondents agreed, whereas 12% of females strongly agreed that women face problems to select for the job due to having not job-oriented education.

Historically the labor market remains under the authority of males. The males' monopoly in the economic sector provides them self-governing and confident life. The situation of males' monopoly market never welcomes the participation of women in the workplace. Although, for the last two decades, the women of Pakistan are continuously making their place in those professions, which were considered a male domain. In Pakistan, fewer women have the power of decision making in the labor market (ILO, 2020; Barth, et al., 2020; Bryson, et al., 2020). The results of the present research revealed 57.80% of females at the workplace agreed there are male trade unions that affect their professional development. Though 30% strongly agreed.

Several obstacles decrease women's involvement as timing, job experience, age factor, high education in the labor market, etc. Organizations should advertise all jobs on an equal basis. A hardy schedule of work demotivates the women for applying for different positions (Davidescu, et al., 2020; Jacobs & Schain, 2009; Sistiani & Prajawati, 2021). Thus the results of the present research revealed 51.60% of females at the workplace agreed they have issues concerning job descriptions, whereas 32.40% strongly agreed.

Organizations should be appointed the right person for the right place. All appointments must be on an equal basis without gender discrimination. Pakistan is a male-dominated society where males are always in the front line. Organizational policies follow the same rules. Male dominance at the workplace prefers to appoint male members rather than promote merit (Cortazar, et al., 2016; McCourt, 2000). The result of the research shows 52.40% of female workers disagreed that the selections for different posts are on merit. While 34% of respondents of the study strongly disagreed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study has been primarily conducted from Quetta (Balochistan), where the tribal system is deep-rooted from generation to generation. All socio-economic activities remain in males' hands. Women are considered the second part of society. The results of the current study show that females have fewer opportunities in the labor market to be appointed without gender discrimination. There are multiple factors such as traditional and cultural values that strictly confine the women to stay at home to accomplish domestic tasks. On the other side organizations follow the same social structure, employers prefer to hire male staff rather than appoint female workers. Appointments are not on an equal basis. Women face several issues due to males' subjugation at the workplace. The findings of the research indicate that women have fewer shares in income due to a lack of job-oriented education.

Gender discrimination is a well-known phenomenon universally. Women have no fundamental rights, which are entitled to every individual by birth without any discrimination. The development of any nation depends on stable economic conditions. Without women's participation, it cannot be possible. There are some recommendations to eliminate employment discrimination against women.

- Organizations should appoint employees without any discrimination.
- All selections should be on merit.
- Organizations should use affirmative steps to introduce policies regarding gender equality.
- Strengthen enforcement of anti-discrimination laws—against women.
- Equal opportunities for getting an education should be given to women.
- Skillful training should be equally provided to men and women at the workplace.

The present study is limited to higher educational institutes and directorates of education of Quetta (Balochistan). The data was gathered from female employees to achieve the targeted objectives of the study. In the future researchers can conduct further studies in different aspects such as job satisfaction of female employees, reasons for employment discrimination.

We are obliged to all female employees of higher educational institutes and educational directorates of Quetta (Balochistan). It was impossible without their support to get information about the research title.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, M., Shoukat, A., & Chaudhary, M. G. (2021). Into the Civic life: The Nexus of Urbanization, Education and Women's Empowerment in Pakistan. *iRASD Journal of Economics*, 3(2), 212-222.
- Adeeba, S., Mansor, N. N. A., Bashir, S., & Zainab, S. S. (2021). The Perception of Glass Ceiling and its Impact on Interpersonal Conflicts in a Masculine Culture: Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy. *Studies of Applied Economics*, 39.
- Amano-Patino, N., Baron, T., & Xiao, P. (2020). Equilibrium wage-setting and the life-cycle gender pay gap. <https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.52417>
- Bari, F. (2000). Women in Pakistan: Asian Development Bank. Programs Department (West) and Office of Environment and Social Development.
- Barth, E., Bryson, A., & Dale-Olsen, H. (2020). Union density effects on productivity and wages. *The Economic Journal*, 130(631), 1898-1936.
- Bryson, A., Dale-Olsen, H., & Nergaard, K. (2020). Gender differences in the union wage premium? A comparative case study. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 26(2), 173-190.
- Cifre, E., Vera, M., & Signani, F. (2015). Women and men at work: Analyzing occupational stress and well-being from a gender perspective. *Revista puertorriqueña de psicología*.
- Cortázar Velarde, J. C., Fuenzalida, J., & Lafuente, M. (2016). Merit-based selection of public managers: Better public sector performance? An exploratory study. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3prITK4>
- Davidescu, A. A., Apostu, S. A., Paul, A., & Casuneanu, I. (2020). Work flexibility, job satisfaction, and job performance among Romanian employees—Implications for sustainable human resource management. *Sustainability*, 12(15), 6086.
- Faridi, M. Z., Chaudhry, I. S., & Anwar, M. (2009). The socio-economic and demographic determinants of women work participation in Pakistan: Evidence from Bahawalpur District. Retrieved from <https://ideas.repec.org/p/pramprapa/22831.html>
- International Labor Organization (ILO,2020). Empowering Women at Work Trade Union Policies and Practices for Gender Equality. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/global/meetings-and-events/events/WCMS_756718/lang-en/index.htm
- International Labour Office. (2014). Resource Guide on Gender Issues in Employment and Labour Market Policies. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_243015.pdf
- Isran, S., & Ali Isran, M. (2012). Low Female Labour Participation in Pakistan: Causes and Consequences. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS)*, 32(2).
- Jacobs, P., & Schain, L. (2009). Professional women: The continuing struggle for acceptance and equality. Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/cj_fac/1/
- Kato, T., & Kodama, N. (2017). Women in the workplace and management practices: Theory and evidence. Retrieved from <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190628963.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780190628963-e-33>
- Majid, H., & Siegmann, K. A. (2021). The Effects of Growth on Women's Employment in Pakistan. *Feminist Economics*, 27(4), 29-61.
- Martin, P., & Barnard, A. (2013). The experience of women in male-dominated occupations: A constructivist grounded theory inquiry. *sa Journal of industrial psychology*, 39(2), 1-12.
- McCourt, W. (2000). Public appointments: From patronage to merit. University of Manchester, Human Resources in Development. Retrieved from https://hummedia.manchester.ac.uk/institutes/gdi/publications/workingpapers/archive/hr/hr_wp09.pdf
- Nasir, H., Alam, S., & Fatima, A. (2020). The Impact of Gender Inequality in Education on Females' Labor Force Participation: A Case of Some Cities of Pakistan. *International Economics Studies*, 50(2), 1-16.
- Panhwar, U., Abro, A., Khawaja, M., Siddiqui, A., & Farshad, M. (2017). Critical Analysis of the Impact of Job on the Social Status of Women in Pakistan. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(6), 17-24.
- Powell, A., & Sang, K. J. (2015). Everyday experiences of sexism in male-dominated professions: A Bourdieusian perspective. *Sociology*, 49(5), 919-936.
- Sadaquat, M. B. (2011). Employment situation of women in Pakistan. *International journal of social economics. International Journal of Social Economics* 38. 98-113
- Sarwar, F., & Abbasi, A. S. (2013). An in-depth analysis of women's labor force participation in Pakistan. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, 15(2), 208-215.
- Shaheen, R., Shabir, G., Faridi, M. Z., & Yasmin, F. (2015). Determinants of female employment status in Pakistan: A case of Sahiwal District. *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences (PJCSS)*, 9(2), 418-437.
- Siegmann, K. A., & Majid, H. (2021). Empowering growth in Pakistan? *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 1-23.

- Sistiani, F., & Prajawati, M. I. (2021). Saving behavior of female workers in new normal. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, 4(9), 2390-2398.
- Tanaka, S., & Muzones, M. (2016). Policy Brief on Female Labor Force Participation in Pakistan. Retrieved from <http://empowerpk.org/Let-Girls-Earn.pdf>(empowerpk.orgwasfirstindexedbyGoogleinJuly2014)
- Xiao, P. (2021). Wage and employment discrimination by gender in labor market equilibrium. *Working Papers*, 144
- Zenger, J., & Folkman, J. (2019). Research: Women score higher than men in most leadership skills. *Harvard Business Review*.