

---

**SOCIAL AND CULTURAL BARRIERS IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A CASE STUDY OF DISTRICT JAMSHORO**

*Irshad Ali Burfat  
Waheed Akbar Khaskheli  
Jameel Ahmed Qureshi*

**ABSTRACT**

*The percentage of female population in our country is more than fifty percent, and the main cause of suppression against women is the joint family system in which the head of the family is the father of the husband instead of husband himself. Our society is dominated by men, and due to this a huge majority of the women in Pakistan are not able to take their own decisions, even to decide their own marriages. In this research paper we will look at the cultural barriers against women empowerment in our country. The sample data for this research paper has been taken from married women of District Jamshoro and the method used is purposive sampling.*

*In this research we will explain the number of different factors for example environment of the family, family background, cultural norms, and approaches towards such norms, moderate attitude, and the dissatisfaction with the society. These factors have been the main causes of the dominance of the male in our society and culture. We also discuss the attitude towards women and subordinate treatment of the females in our society.*

---

**Keywords:** Joint Family, Male Dominancy, Cultural Barriers, Women Empowerment, Cultural Norms

**INTRODUCTION**

Pakistani society is the male dominant society and it's structure has remained different structures from time to time like old structure of the family in the Pakistani society was a multidimensional sword for the females in our society. Therefore, it is the root cause of the poor female position in Pakistan. Generally women in any male dominant society and especially are denied from their basic rights which are education, health and right of self determination. Moreover, they are also facing biased behavior towards getting employment. Though women have great majority in our society which can be utilized in constructive work, they are expected and forced to perform traditional house holding tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and washing. In our society women are not getting the deserved place at their working places. The literacy rate of women in Pakistan is also not satisfactory because it's very low unlike men enjoy. The overall literacy rate in Pakistan is 58% which is lowest in South Asia, and the female literacy rate

is even worst which is just 47%, and if you go to the rural areas, this rates decrease even more by 30% (PSLM Survey, 2013-14).

### **Discrimination Against Women**

The discrimination on the basis of gender is always developed as the fraction of human personality through the process of socialization, which is consequently, can be seen in the every step of the life. The behavior against females in our society is developed through the socialization process, and then reflected in our society as a whole. The socialization on the basis of gender starts right from the time of birth when everybody asks from the parents whether a girl or boy? The major stakeholders in our society are the peer groups, family, media (print, and electronic) and educational institutes. All of these stakeholders are equally responsible for strengthening the gender stereotypes in our society. The population of women is more than the men in Pakistan (51%) (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey, 2013-14) but the gender discrimination can be seen in our behavior during childhood, and also in the adolescence. The characteristics of men and women are very much different from each other therefore, their personalities are also different. The physical structure of the women is different, and there are certain cultural features that make women different from the men. The roles of both the sexes in society are different. The gender stereotypes exploit these natural differences to discriminate the females in our society.

### **Share of Women in Job Opportunities and Challenges at Working Place**

In society females workers are not offered same wages as for males, and females are often preferred for lower paid jobs. These low paid jobs are considered as female jobs, and also referred as the pink color jobs. Generally, in society it is perceived that the females are not good enough for the jobs in which more risk is involved (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

It is also perceived in society that the leadership and management qualities among the women are less as compared to men, so they are not considered for the higher positions in the offices. If you take a close look at the various government, and private organizations, you can see that there are very few females in the executive positions in country (Women participation: A challenge for employment in Pakistan).

### **The Social Standing of the Women**

The empowerment of women also includes the access towards available resources, opportunities, and information. Besides that, to empower women we also need to include women in the process of decision making, and give her authority where necessary. There are improvements seen in

various other fields during the last decade or so, but there is no significant improvement visible in the female life, and women are still living in worst social and economic conditions. It is vital for the development of our country that we must empower the women in financial, political, and economic issues. The job opportunities for the females in country are very few which is the main cause of poverty among lower income families and females. There are various cases of domestic violence against females of all ages reported. The figures of gang rape, and “honor” killings are also increasing. There is very less protection available for women in our society. There is lack of access for women towards food security, hygienic water, and freedom of decision making. There are many cases reported in the print and electronic media in which women are denied justice, and have very low access to different social services. According to the figures there is a high rate of infant mortality, and maternal mortality in the Pakistan. The problems under nutrition and lack of education have also become the major cause of increasing social gap between man and woman. It becomes challenge for Pakistan to achieve the desired level of femininity uniformity indicator, and also the Gender Parity Index). These challenges are multidimensional because of regional variations, and urban rural difference. The social difference between males and females in society can also be observed with the gap in income level. The average monthly income for males in Pakistan is Rs.7998 whereas the average monthly income for females is just Rs.5189 (Gender wage Gaps in Asia and Pacific by International Labour Organization).

#### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To examine the status of women in our society, and address the main issues that women are facing today.
2. To identify the cultural barrier in women empowerment
3. To give some useful recommendation that how to overcome the cultural barriers regarding women empowerment.

The study is primarily based on the primary data which is collected with the help of structured questionnaire/interview schedule. Secondary sources of data were utilized where necessary.

#### **TYPES OF STUDY**

The type of present study is exploratory in nature research is to build and elaborate a theory and to provide facts about the causes of the topic.

The universe of present study is Jamshoro includes Educational institutions, Banks, Hospitals, and Private sectors.

A total number of 100 married working women are selected for the present study through convenient sampling technique.

**STATISTICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLES**

Data collected from the mixed population to get the complete and true response and result. Researchers included different respondents belonging to the different walks of life and sectors. Following is the distribution according to the sector from which researchers took detailed survey references are missing here:

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>No. of Samples</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Bankers	10	20%
Teachers	20	40%
Nurses	10	20%
Low class workers (Telephone operators, Receptionist, sweepers, Attendants & Peon)	10	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

The following tools and methods were used to collect data:

- Structured Questionnaire/ Interview Schedule.
- Official documents/ Secondary Data

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**TABLE-1**  
**CULTURAL NORMS INFLUENCE THE PARENTS TO BEHAVE STRICTLY TO DAUGHTER**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
To great extent	23	46.0
To some extent	17	34.0
Not at all	10	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table shows the relationship between cultural norms influence the parents to behave strictly to daughter in this regard the responses are: To great extent 46%, to great extent 34%, not at all 34%.

**TABLE-2**  
**NOT MUCH PREFERENCE GIVEN BY PARENTS**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
To great extent	21	42.0
To some extent	17	34.0
Not at all	12	24.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table shows the distribution about not much preference given by parents: to great extent 42%, to some extent 34%, not at all 24%.

**TABLE-3**  
**AUTHORITY IN DECISION MAKING REGARDING FAMILY MATTERS**

	Frequency	Percent
Self	9	18.0
Husband	19	38.0
Mutual	22	44.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table shows the distribution on authority in decision making regarding family matters. Self 18%, Husband 38%, Mutual 44%.

**TABLE-4**  
**CULTURAL NORMS ENABLE HUSBAND TO TREAT WIFE AS HE WANTS**

	Frequency	Percent
To great extent	22	44.0
To some extent	17	34.0
Not at all	11	22.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table shows the relationship between cultural norms enable husband to treat wife as he wants in this regard the responses are to great extent 44%, to some extent 34% Not at all 22%.

**TABLE-5**  
**HUSBAND AS BARRIER IN CONTINUING JOB**

	Frequency	Percent
To great extent	22	44.0
To some extent	19	38.0
Not at all	9	18.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table showing the relationship between husband as barrier in continuing job, to great extent 44%, to some extent 38% not at all 18%.

**TABLE-6**  
**PLEASURE TREATMENT OF HUSBAND AT THE TIME OF ARRIVAL OF JOB**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
To great extent	7	14.0
To some extent	13	26.0
Not at all	30	60.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table shows the distribution about pleasure treatment of husband at the time of arrival of job, to great extent 14%, to some extent 26 %, Not at all 60%.

**TABLE-7**  
**HUSBAND FEELS DISAPPOINTED ABOUT THEIR JOB**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
To great extent	24	48.0
To some extent	16	32.0
Not at all	10	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table shows the distribution about husband feels disappointed about their job, to great extent 48%, to some extent 32%, Not at all 20%.

**TABLE-8**  
**DECISION FOR SELECTION OF JOB**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Personal	6	12.0
Parents	31	62.0
Husband	6	12.0
Mutual	6	12.0
23.00	1	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table shows the distribution about decision for selection of job. Personal 12%, Parents 64 %, Husband 12%, Mutual 64%.

**TABLE-9**  
**JOB SATISFACTION**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
To great extent	23	46.0
To some extent	20	40.0
Not at all	7	14.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table shows the distribution about Job satisfaction, to great extent 46%, to some extent 40%, Not at all 14%.

**TABLE-10**  
**EMPOWERMENT**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male Dominancy	24	42.0
Lack of Education	7	14.0
Lack of opportunities	11	22.0
Misuse of Religious Knowledge	8	16.0
No Barrier	6	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table shows the distribution about Barriers in women empowerment, Male dominancy 42%, Lack of Education 14%, Lack o opportunities 22%, Misuse of religious knowledge 16%, No barrier 6%.

### **CONCLUSION**

According the social and cultural norms of our society, the males and females are assigned their own roles in the family, and women have to accept most of the important responsibilities of the family. Because of this unjustified division of work, it creates various social and economical problem among the females such as anxiety, mental stress, physical disturbance. The most of the time of women in our society spends in fulfilling the household responsibilities, and most of the females have no free time to spend with the outside world. As our society is male dominant and men possess all the social and economical powers. It is the men who have to make all the important decisions, whether he is in the role of father, husband, brother or even an uncle.

From our research it is concluded that the joint family system is the root cause of putting social restriction on the females. In this joint family system parents always impose huge restrictions on their female children as compared to independent families. Whether it is to make decisions about the marriage of the girl, or whether she is allowed to complete her education, or get a job, all has been taken by the parents, and mostly the father. In joint family system, all these decisions are taken in a dictatorial style, and powers are used by the parents brutally which creates massive mental stress among the girls. In traditions, the females have no right at all to take their personal decisions. In this research we have also revealed that most of the decisions after marriage for some important issues such as family planning, education of the children, and other similar decisions are taken by the husband. Women have to accept the decisions and they have no other choice left. Women have no right to make choices about their own life. Mostly, females have to opt the decisions of their fathers regarding which field they have to study, and which profession they have to go. As considered as a male dominated society therefore males use all his powers to suppress the women. This problem is more reported in the rural areas as compared to the cities. Most of the husbands do not allow their wives to do any kind of job, and they prefer that their wives live in the house. This problem is reported more in the joint families. There are no equal opportunities for the jobs for the females. To change the social and traditional values of general public regarding women empowerment we have to spend more on education. We also need to educate males in our society to provide basic rights to the female members of their family. We have to use the formal as well as, informal means of education in this regard. It is also needed that the awareness about woman rights must be achieved through the educational curriculum at all levels. The non-governmental organizations also need to launch different campaigns to create awareness among the general public regarding women empowerment. This can be achieved through conferences, seminars, lectures, and other special programs. The religious scholars can also play a vital role in this regard by sharing the examples from the Islamic history regarding equal rights for women. In Islam there are equal rights for women are provided on health, politics, and educational fields.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Steps must be taken to encourage women by giving them equal opportunities in Jobs.
- Political and religious leaders must work to reduce the gender discrimination
- Steps must be taken for social and economical development of the women



- Women should be given equal participation in National and Provincial assemblies
- Women should be included in policy making at national level

**REFERENCES**

- Anil Bhumimali & S. Anil Kumar (2007). Women in the face of Globalization, Serials Publications, New Dehli India.
- DB, ILO, (2011). Women and Labour Markets in Asia: Rebalancing for Gender Equality; A joint publication of ILO and ADB, Bangkok.
- Khawar Mumtaz & Fareeda Shaheed (1987). Women of Pakistan, Two Steps Forward one Step Back? Vanguard Books (Pvt) Ltd, Lahore Pakistan.
- Labour Force Survey (2014-15). (<http://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/labour-force-survey-2013-14-annual-report>)
- Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2013-14). Labour Force Survey 2013-14, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.
- Pakistani women earn 38.5% less than men: report (<http://tribune.com.pk/story/802222/pakistani-women-earn-38-5-less-than-men-report/>)
- R.K. Dutta (2003). "Women Empowerment" Reference Press, New Dehli India.
- Ranjeet Kumar (2011). 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Research Methodology Step by Step Guide For Beginners, Sage Publication Ltd.
- Rashida Patel (2010). "Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment in Pakistan", Oxford University Press, Pakistan.
- Tanvir Junejo (2004). Aurat, Samaj Ain Dhadh. Tehqeeqi Mazmoon, Published by Aurtazaad, Women's Research & Publications Karachi
- W. Lawrence Neuman (2008). Social Research Methods Qualitative & Quantitative Approaches, Dorling Kindersley (India) Pvt Ltd., Pearson Education in South Asia.
- Women participation: a challenge for employment in Pakistan (<http://www.brecorder.com/brrresearch/44:miscellaneous/2825:women-participation:-a-challenge-for-employment-in-pakistan/>)