

GENDER GAP IN PAKISTAN: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of gender stratification and gender segregation is manifest almost in all over the world but its nature and magnitude may vary from society to society. The severity of this phenomenon is strictly found in traditional societies like Pakistan. The present study is the analysis of secondary data which aims to identify the potential areas of gender gaps i.e. education, health, political participation, employment, etc in Pakistan. It has been learnt from the analysis that phenomena of gender segregation and gender gap are wide and can be observed in almost every walk of life. The study suggested that gender gap can be reduced by taking concrete steps at micro and macro level.

Keywords: gender stratification, gender segregation, gender gap, political participation

INTRODUCTION

In ancient times, women were considered to be the subservient to men. According to encyclopedia Britannica, the place of women was degraded to such an extent in ancient Greece that she was generally regarded nothing more than a child bearing maid. Women were not treated like human beings, rather they were considered a commodity that did not have any emotions or feelings and could be sold or purchased at any time and by any one.

But now things are getting change in the result of the synergic effects of the women emancipation movements and the demand of equal rights. Intellectual thinkers started thinking and discussing about this plight and recommended structural changes in the social fabric of the society. Resultantly, new avenues opened for the place of women in all walks of life hence reduced gender gap. This movement brought changes not only in the European societies but has also affected the entire world.

Pakistan is the country where feudalism is, and has always been in power and exercised by the feudalistic aristocratic land lords. Strong, stagnant and pseudo cultural and social are, and have been practiced considering the most sacred and holy path for the life. These values are pro-men and originated from the old patriarchal system of the society. Women in this system are given very lesser chances in all walks of life comparing with men. Women are supposed to subjugate before male of the family even in any case. Access to education, health, job, labour market and other opportunities are restricted and decided by the men of the family. This persistent and omnipresent practice has increased gender gap at very large scale, hence women, by and large, are lagging behind comparing with male. This state of agony needs major surgery of the fabric of the society in order to attain a sustainable and equitable development of the country. According to global gender gap report of 2008, gender gap index ranking of Pakistan is 127th out of 130 countries which is very low and alarming.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the objective of the study.

- a. Identify and assess major aspects of life where gender gap existing in the society
- b. Assess and analyze the magnitude of gender gap

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Following studies are showing literature review on the topic of the study.

Chishti and Lodhi (1988) study school attendance decision using data from socioeconomic survey of Karachi conducted during 1987-88. Their logit analysis reveals that the decision to attend school depends on the gender of the potential student, household income, parents' education, and the ethnic background. Karachi is the largest metropolitan city of Pakistan with the highest literacy rate in the country. Hence findings for this city cannot be automatically generalised for the rest of the country, especially rural areas.

The data for the Food Security Management Project jointly collected by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in 1986 form the basis of Hamid's (1993) study. The sample of the study consists of households with 5 to 14 years old children. She uses cross tabulation to study the distribution of households sending their children to school from various variables of interest like household income, household heads' profession, education, and gender. The percentage of households sending all children or at least one child to school is found to be higher for households with higher income, with a female head, or a more educated head. Since the scope of the cross tabulation analysis is limited by its inability to control for more than a few variables at best, the results can be only suggestive.

Primary school attendance behaviour of children between the age of seven and fourteen years is the subject matter of the paper by Sathar and Lloyd (1994). They estimate logit regressions using data from Pakistan Integrated Household Survey of 1991, a nationally representative sample survey. They find that, in general, children with educated parents, higher household consumption level, and those who live in Punjab are more likely to be enrolled in a primary school. Girls are less likely to attend a primary school, though their chances in rural areas are improved with the availability of a girls-only public school within a distance of one kilometer.

Burney and Irfan's (1991, 1995) focus on the determinants of child school enrolment. In both studies, they use data from a nationally representative survey called Population, Labour Force, and Migration Survey. The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) and International Labour Organisation (ILO) conducted this survey in 1979. Their methods of estimation include linear probability, probit, and logit regressions. They report several different regression results in the two studies, using different estimation methods and separate subsamples for gender, age groups, and regions. Household income, father's education above primary level and his tenurial status of landowner emerge as significant positive influences on children's school enrolment. A salient feature of these studies, which distinguishes them from other similar research for Pakistan, is inclusion of a community variable. They find a positive and significant relationship between village literacy level and school enrolment.

Alderman *et al.* (1996) present some probit estimates for school attendance in Pakistan. The data used in this study was collected by IFPRI in its survey of rural Pakistan during 1988-89. The primary purpose of this study was to decompose the gender gap in cognitive (literacy and mathematical) skills into components attributable to various factors underlying this gap. In this process they also estimate probit functions, which attempt to explain factors determining probability of starting school. They consider all individuals between the age of 10 and 25 with relevant data in the sample for whom a school was locally available when they were of age to start school. According to IFPRI data used by them, most of the students attending primary school in rural Pakistan fall in the age group of 5 to 14 years. Thus their choice of age group is bound to exclude a significant proportion of primary school age population. Moreover, many respondents in their sample must have made a decision regarding school attendance long ago. Hence the explanatory variables like household income and book costs do not necessarily reflect the values of these magnitudes at the time of decision. They find that travel time to school and book costs (as a proxy for all out-of-pocket-cost) are important influences on the decision to start schooling. Other variables that figure in their school attendance probits include a measure of household's permanent income, father's attendance of middle school, a quadratic in age, and square of a measure of preschool ability.

It is evident from this brief review that gender and income play important role in decision making of different social affairs.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on secondary data related with gender gap. Reports published by Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Donor Organizations (IDOs) on the gender situation of Pakistan have been collected and reviewed to find out the required information on gender issues and gap. No field survey has been conducted to collect the information. Health, Population, education and employment are the major focusing areas of this study.

Sources of Data

A review of the following reports has been made for the study:

- a. National Feedback Report 2006
- b. Compendium on Gender Statistics in Pakistan 2004
- c. Pakistan Women in Development, Government Policy and Foreign Assistance 1992
- d. Pakistani Women in Context (a companion volume to the Pakistan country gender assessment 2005)
- e. Women In The Labour Market In Changing Economies: Demographic Issues
- f. Pakistan Economic Survey 2005-06
- g. Natural Resources Management and Gender 2006

Analysis of the Data

An effort has been made to analyse the secondary data collected from the above mentioned reports. Following are the table containing information regarding gender gap in Pakistan.

Table 1 explains women and men population since the 1947 to 1998 according to census years. Data revealed that the women proportion of the total population is 45.5% in 1947 and the same figure has reached up to 48.0% in 1998 and the net difference is 3%. Very minor change has been viewed between the figures of 1951 and 1961 respectively. Table revealed that men have always been more in number (4%) than women since birth of Pakistan which shows significant majority comparing with women.

Table 1. Total Population of the Country By Sex from 1947-1998

<i>Year</i>	<i>Women(000)</i>	<i>Men(000)</i>	<i>Both Sexes(000)</i>	<i>Proportion of women</i>
1947	15,100	17,400	32,500	45.5
1951	15,593	18,147	33,740	46.2
1961	19,920	22,960	42,880	46.5
1972	30,476	34,833	65,309	46.7
1981	40,021	44,233	84,254	47.5
1998	63,478	68,874	132,352	48.0

Source: Population Censuses 1951, 1961, 1972, 1981 and 1998. Estimates for 1947

Table 2. Sex Ratio by Area, Pakistan 1951-1998

<i>Year</i>	<i>Women per Hundred Men</i>		
	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>All Areas</i>
1951	78.6	87.2	85.9
1961	79.6	88.9	86.8
1972	83.6	88.8	87.5
1981	86.7	92.0	90.5
1998	89.2	93.7	92.2

Source: Population Censuses 1951, 1961 and 1998

Area wise sex ratios have been mention in the table 2 given above. Data revealed that over all sex ratio is increasing both in rural and urban areas of the country. In 1951, sex ratios of rural and urban areas were 78.6 and 87.2 respectively which has tremendously increased (89.2 and 93.7) in both the areas. This trend shows that women are increasing in number in both urban and rural areas of Pakistan. Overall sex ratio of the country for the year 1998 was 92.2 comparing with 85.9 in the year of 1951.

Table 3 below shows crude death rate by gender. Data explain that male died more than female in urban and rural areas. This may be due to high number of male population at birth. It can be seen that death rate for both sexes in urban and rural areas has been declined and this may be due to improved health facilities and extension of immunization programs by the government.

Table 3. Crude Death Rate by Gender

Year	Crude Death Rates Per 1000 Population					
	Urban Area			Rural Area		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female
1996	7.1	8.0	6.1	9.6	10.0	9.2
1997	7.3	7.7	6.9	9.6	10.3	8.9
1999	7.1	7.6	6.6	9.2	9.9	8.5
2000	6.7	7.0	6.3	8.8	9.2	8.3
2001	6.3	6.6	6.0	7.6	7.9	7.3
2003	6.2	6.8	5.6	7.4	7.9	6.9

Source: Population Censuses 1951, 1961 and 1998

Table 4. Infant Mortality Rates by Urban Rural Area and Sex, Pakistan 1995-2001

Year	Crude Death Rates Per 1000 Population					
	Urban Area			Rural Area		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female
1995	65.5	75.4	70.6	102.0	107.1	104.6
1997	68.4	76.6	72.7	81.2	96.6	89.2
1999	62.0	80.8	71.8	73.9	101.5	88.3
2000	57.0	80.9	69.3	84.3	89.1	86.8
2001	69.2	68.3	68.9	82.3	82.8	80.9
2003	64.4	69.7	67.2	74.1	85.6	80.6

Source: Pakistan Demographic Surveys, 2002

Gender wise Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) of rural and urban areas is given above in table 4. Crude death rate of urban area by male and female was 75.4 and 70.6 for the year 1995. In the same year, IMR appeared to be 102.0 and 104.6 respectively. In year 2003, over all death rate of both sexes of urban and rural areas have been declined up to 64.4 and 74.1 respectively.

Table 5. Literacy rate by 10 years and above of urban and rural areas

Area	Literacy Rates (10 years & above) in percentage								
	1998-99 PIHS			2001-02 PIHS			2004-05 PSLM		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Pakistan	45.0	59.0	31.0	45.0	58.0	32.0	53.0	65.0	40.0
Rural	36.0	52.0	20.0	36.0	51.0	21.0	44.0	58.0	29.0
Urban	65.0	73.0	56.0	64.0	72.0	56.0	71.0	78.0	62.0

Source: Pakistan Income and household survey (PIHS) & Pakistan Social & Living Measurement Survey (PSLM) 2004-05

Women are less literate than men in both urban and rural areas of the country. Data showing (table 5) that in year 1998-99, 59% male were literate comparing with 31% female. This gap further increased (52.0% of male and 20.0% female literate) in rural areas. Whereas in 2004-05, 65.0% male were literate comparing with 40.0% female of the same year. Literacy gap between genders is very high which is evident from the data that in rural areas, 58.0% male were literate comparing with 29.0% of female which constitute half literate population to men. But this gap is reduced in urban areas where 78.0% male were literate comparing with 62.0% of female.

Table 6. Gross Enrollment Rate by Gender

Area	Gross Enrollment Rate at the Middle level (age 10-12)					
	2001-02			2004-05		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Pakistan	41	45	35	46	51	40
Urban Areas	63	58	68	64	63	64
Rural Areas	32	41	21	38	46	29

Source: Pakistan Social & Living Measurement Survey (PSLM) 2004-05

Gross enrollment by gender is given in table 5. Over all, data showed that male were more enrolled in school than female. It is interesting to note that 58% male were enrolled in urban areas comparing with 68% females (year 2001-02) which is very low. Gender gap in rural areas is higher and women are restricted to participate in educational opportunities. Data showed that 29% women are enrolled at middle standard of education comparing with 46% male in the year 2004-05. There is 8% overall increase in female enrollment rate between the years of 2001-2005 which is appreciating.

Table 7. Available Human Resource Related with Health

Type	Up to 2002-03	Up to 2003-04	Up to 2004-05	Up to 2005-06
Registered doctors	101635	108062	113206	118160*
Registered dentist	5068	5530	6127	6761
Registered nurses	44520	46331	48446	33427**

* Source: Pakistan Medical and dental Council (PMDC)

** Number of registered nurses as of February 2006. The actual number of nurses working is 27677.

Data have also been collected related with available human resource for the health of the people. No gender based segregated data could be found in the short period of time, therefore overall yearly based distributed data of the doctors, dentists and nurses is presented in table 7 given above. Data explained that a very minor increase in the number of doctors have been found yearly against the 2.6% annual population growth of the Pakistan. More than 20% dentists have been increased between the periods of 2002 to 2006 which is highly appreciating. About 25% decrease in total strength of nurses have been reported from 2002 to 2006 which is very alarming for the women employment and education opportunities as well as for the health facilities. It is interested to note that health facilities in the country are increasing and number of nurses is at decreasing.

Table 8. Employment and Labour Force

Reference year	Participation/activity rate(%)					
	Crude activity rate (CAR)			Refined activity rate (RAR)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1997-1998	29.38	47.98	9.40	43.34	70.48	13.92
1999-00	28.97	47.63	9.29	42.8	70.39	13.72
2001-02	29.61	48.04	9.86	43.34	70.32	14.44
2003-04	30.41	48.74	11.61	43.74	70.61	15.93
2005-06	32.8	50.7	14.1	46.9	72.7	20.2

Source: Economic Survey of Pakistan 2006-07

In Pakistan, labour force participation is estimated on the basis of the Crude Activity Rate (CAR) and the Refined Activity Rate (RAR). The CAR is the percentage of the labour force in the total population while RAR is the percentage of the labour force in the population of persons 10 years of age and above. Data showed (table 9) that both CAR and RAR has been overwhelmingly higher in male comparing with female. CAR for male in 2005-06 is 50.7% whereas the same for the female is only 14.1. The difference between both is about 36.6% which is very high. RAR for the same period in male 72.7% which is again high comparing with female (20.2%) net difference between male and

female is about 50.5% which is very high showing the trend of women exclusion form the labour market and dictating the persistent gender gap.

Unemployment rate by sex and age have been given in the table 9 given below. Data exhibit in table showed that over all women are more unemployed than men almost in every age bracket showing gender gap and explaining the scarcity of job opportunities for women comparing with men. Women are more unemployed in number than men at their early youth age (15-19) and old age (50 to 60 years and above) in the year 2005-06. 10.2% male have been reported unemployed belonging 15-19 years of age bracket which is the highest one.

Table 9. Unemployment Rate by Sex and Age (%)

Age group	2003-04			2005-06		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Ten years & above	7.7	6.6	12.8	6.5	5.7	9.7
10-14	12.8	13.6	10.4	8.3	8.8	7.0
15-19	13.2	12.8	14.9	10.4	10.2	11.3
20-24	10.3	9.3	15.0	7.6	7.1	9.4
25-29	7.1	6.1	12.5	5.3	4.8	7.4
30-34	4.5	3.8	7.4	3.0	2.5	4.7
35-39	2.9	2.0	7.2	2.6	1.8	5.4
40-44	2.9	2.5	4.8	2.6	2.1	4.6
45-49	3.5	2.3	9.5	3.4	2.5	6.5
50-54	5.1	3.5	12.2	6.3	4.7	13.7
55-59	7.1	4.5	20.7	9.7	6.9	20.9
60 and above	12.8	8.9	36.1	13.8	9.7	36.0

Source: Economic Survey of Pakistan 2006-07

Table 10. Registered votes/voters Participation by Sex in 2002

Areas	Registered voters (in million)					
	Registered voters (in million)			Percent of total voters		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	
Pakistan	33.16	38.17	71.86	46.1	53.9	
Punjab	19.38	21.87	41.24	47.0	58.0	
Sindh	7.41	8.77	16.17	45.8	54.2	
NWFP	3.92	4.93	8.85	44.3	55.7	
Balochistan	1.80	2.12	3.93	45.9	54.1	
Islamabad	0.18	0.2	0.38	47.0	53.0	

Source: National Assembly Secretariat, Parliament House, Islamabad

Gender wise political participation has also been analysed and data regarding registration of voters have also been collected given in table 10. Women are less in voters (46.1%) than men (53.9%) in Pakistan. The situation is same in all the provinces of the country showing gender gap in the politics of the country.

Data regarding elected members of the parliament was also analysed mentioned in table 11 below. Trend shows that before election 2002, participation of the women in nation assembly was very nominal and less than 3% women participation has been reported before election 2002 in national assembly. This shows a wide gender gap at that time. Whereas male has always been dominated the parliament in terms of numbers and consequently decisions about different social issues have also been taken by the male members. Since 2002, participation of the women has been increased (21.0%) in the assembly due to allocation of reserved seats for women and over all increases in seats of national assembly. Hence, gender gap in political process has significantly decreased.

Table 11. Elected Members of the National Assembly by Gender

Election year	Total number of seats	Number of elected members of national assembly			
		Women(Nos.)	Percent to total	Men(Nos.)	Percent to total
1990	217	2	0.9	215	99.1
1993	217	4	1.8	213	98.2
1997	217	6	2.8	211	97.2
2002	342	73	21.0	269	79.0

Source: National Assembly Secretariat, Parliament House, Islamabad

CONCLUSION

- I. Demographically, male are more in numbers than women showing gender gap in terms of strength. Sex ratio of the country is high that is around 108 male per hundred female. Crude death rate of male is higher than female both in urban and rural areas of Pakistan showing high life expectancy of women comparing with men. Infant mortality among male is higher in contrast with female.
- II. Literacy rate is high in male comparing with female showing high gender gap. This gap further increased in rural areas where women are restricted to get education and stay at home to help out domestic work. Gross enrollment ration of the men is also high comparing with female.
- III. Health facilities are more extended towards male comparing with female. On the other hand, women consult health facilities more than men showing that women are facing more health problems than men.
- IV. Male are more in labour force and more employed than women. Women seem more excluded from job and labour market due to many socio-cultural factors ranging patriarchal system and skill required in the market. Unemployment among women is higher than men showing huge gender gap.
- V. Male overwhelmingly represented in the national assembly as compare to female. Similarly, women voters are less in numbers than male.
- VI. On the basis of the data analysis and above mentioned findings, it can be concluded that there is a wide gender gap exist in social and cultural life of the Pakistan. Women due to which, may be suffering more and availing less options of enjoying life in comparison with male. They have been restricted to participate in basic aspects of life and confined to stay at home or may be considered unable to perform equal to men.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Enrollment of the female must be enhanced by ensuring effective mechanism to stay at school at least up to primary level.
- b. Economic constraints may be removed by improving micro economics of the women. Rural areas should be at priority list and major operations to achieve literacy target may be initiated.
- c. Health facilities should be extended up to gross root level so that women could avail more facilities and enjoy better health. Maternal and child health should be at the priority of the government.
- d. Women should be given quota in the labour and job market which should be legalized by issuing a legal act on it. Security at job place may be provided and ensured so that women could do job more safely and confidently. Unemployment of male and female and female may be addressed by the government by introducing new industrial units in the rural and remote areas. This will help to reduce the rate of rural urban migration and provide jobs to the rural labour at door step.

- e. Women political participation may be increased through increasing their rate of casting vote. They should be compelled by the government to cast vote in every. Mainstreaming of the women may be increased and they would be able to take the pro-women decisions.

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