Role of Patriarchal Norms in Deprivation of Women from their Political Rights in Pukhtoon Society

Asad U*, Najib K, Mussawar S and Farooq K

Department of Rural Sociology, University of Agriculture, Peshawar, 25130, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Abstract

The major objective of this research paper is to find out the role of patriarchal norms in constraining women political rights in Pukhtoon Society, of District Dir Lower, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Pakistan. Data was collected from 205 randomly selected voting age women from four selected villages of Dir Lower. The sampled respondents were interviewed on a pretested interview schedule covering both independent (patriarchal norms) and dependent (women political rights) variables. Chi-square test was used for testing the association between dependent study variables. Women political participation had a highly significant association with Patriarchy symbolizes in Pukhtoon society (p=0.000), gender inequality in Pukhtoon (p=0.000), disliking employment decisions by women (p=0.000), female decision-making at house hold level (p=0.000), existence of opportunities for women to bring positive change (p=0.000), women subordinate position to men (p=0.000) and deprivation of women rights (p=0.000). Implementation of verdicts of higher courts in ensuring women political rights were policy recommendations in light of study.

Keywords: Political rights; Patriarchy; Pukhtun society

Introduction

Women empowerment refers to "the right of women to have and to decide their choices and women's sense of self-worth; the right to have greater opportunities and to have access to available resources; their right to have control their own lives both inside and outside of the homes and the ability to affect the direction of social change to create a very just social and economic order at both national and international level" [1].

The strength and the nature of the women empowerment varies from society to society and from country to country due to the alteration in socio-cultural and economic setup [2]. This is the reason that women have poor living standard throughout the world that includes gender based socio-economic inequality. The situation of the third world is more catastrophic in this regard. Women are considered to be secondary and they do not have any authority or role in the economic and political affairs of the society [3].

All over the globe, employment and political activities are referred and linked to sex and gender where men are responsible and are assigned the superior positions while women are not supposed to have the same. In response to this scenario women are not ready to take part in country's politics. They are even not aware about the political parties and the political system of the country [4]. Women's political empowerment means the autonomy of women to cast vote according to their choice, political participation, contesting election, political expression and demonstration, authority, power politics, decision-making and implementation regarding their actions. In order to have a workable democratic polity, the importance of women's political participation and their empowerment has been increasingly realized throughout the globe [5].

Nearly half of the world's population is constituted by women. Owing to this reality any democratic system would not be able to run effectively without the involvement of half of the population [5]. This is general statement that women have nothing to do with politics and that political activities are restricted to the public sector and by nature women belong to the private sector and politics is unfamiliar to them. The "Capabilities" issues are linked with women and that are not with other marginalized groups which are mostly based on the identity of

cast system in which women have been kept in lower position in social system [6].

Patriarchy is considered to be a dominant family system in Pakistan. This system support a rigid division of labor and have restricted women's freedom of expression and freedom of movement. This system has strictly determined the role of women in every day jobs. A women's status is linked with her family and her role is considered to be important if she is bearing and rearing children and is caring elder family members. Discrimination between women and men can be seen in the sectors of education, access to health facilities, employment, political participation, decision making and job opportunities and less investment and interest in female's education is a common practice in Pakistani society. The status of women in society and even in a family is not considered to be satisfactory and thus women have been discriminated in all walks of life [7].

In labor force, Pakistan is among the lowest level of participation rate of women to be in labor force as male participation rate is 70.1% of the total male of ten years and above. This scenario indicates that Pakistan is the country where restrictions are imposed on women's paid jobs. Alarming situation is faced by Pakistan in terms of women's participation in labor force as women participation in labor force of Pakistan is ranked 2nd lowest [8].

In Pukhtoon culture, women's involvement in politics is not satisfactory. Pukhtoon women are deprived of majority of their basic political rights. They have not equal access to political activities i.e., voting, leadership, contesting election, freedom of expression, decision making and decision implementation etc. Lot of factors are

responsible for the increasing oppression and discrimination of women in political participation and their empowerment. These include ignorance, illiteracy, economic dependency, pressure groups, lack of awareness, gender sensitivity, lack of security, lack of interest and false consciousness about self-etc. Also, the government does not play its active role to provide equal opportunities to both male and female to participate in common activities to ensure their contributions in every field of life which will lead to national development. Furthermore, less involvement in decision making process, violation of the reproductive rights, low wages, sexual harassment at work place, risky child delivery, poor health, inhuman social customs and traditions, sexual and physical violence are other general problems faced by women in Pukhtoon society.

The importance of women empowerment and political participation cannot be neglected in modern world including Pukhtoon society. Women are considered secondary in position and dealt as second class citizens. Women face tremendous socio-cultural, economic and legal obstacles in their development. This disengagement of women from power have its centuries old deep roots in local traditions. Insufficient representation of women in political sphere have long term effects on development of a country on one side and putting women rights at stake on other side. Political participation of women is negligible. Despite of several legislations and creation of favorable policies by the government, the authorities failed to ensure women's political participation. The socio-cultural roots of women role in society and their families are the probable reasons that disallow women's political participation. These societal efforts are to exclude women from political participation. This paper aims at finding the association of prevailing patriarchal norms and women's political participation in Pukhtoon society.

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in four randomly selected villages, namely Wari Payen, Wari Bala, Daskor and Kakad, of union council Wari District Dir upper. Data was collected from the women folk of voting age from the concerned villages. Total voting age women in the selected villages amounted to 363 for which a sample size of 205 is required.

The conceptual framework (Table 1) comprised of an independent variable (patriarchal norms) and a dependent variable (women's political participation). The data was collected on a pretested interview schedule while using likert scale as a measuring tool. The dependent variable (women political participation) was indexed and cross tabulated with independent variable (patriarchy) to measure their association. Chi-square test, as outlined by Tai in 1978, was used at bi-variate level to test the association among variables.

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{r} \sum_{j=1}^{c} \frac{(O_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}}$$

Where (χ^2) = Chi-square for two categorical variables.

$$\sum_{j=1}^{c} = \text{Total of } i^{th} \text{ row}$$

$$\sum_{j=1}^{c} = \text{Total of } j^{th} \text{ column}$$

Independent variable	Dependent variable
Patriarchy	Women political participation

Table 1: Conceptual framework.

S. No	Patriarchy	Yes	No	Don't Know
1	Patriarchy is practiced in Pukhtoon society.	196 (95.6)	09 (4.4)	0 (0)
2	Gender equality is possible in Pukhtoon society.	146 (71.2)	59 (28.8)	0 (0)
3	You like women in their employment decisions.	175 (85.4)	30 (14.6)	0 (0)
4	Only the male members of your family participate in voting.	165 (80.5)	40 (19.5)	0 (0)
5	Male members encourage female participation and decision making at household level.	164 (80)	39 (19)	02 (1)
6	Organizations are working in your area to safeguard women's interests.	25 (12.2)	174 (84.9)	06 (2.9)
7	Women have opportunity to bring change in society.	122 (59.5)	83 (40.5)	0 (0)
8	Male dominancy as ensured through keeping women in subordinate position.	125 (61)	65 (31.7)	15 (7.3)
9	Women can contribute to the development of the society like men.	155 (75.6)	49 (23.9)	1 (0.5)
10	Patriarchy is responsible for the deprivation of women from their rights.	134 (65.4)	70 (34.1)	01 (0.5)
Source: Survey, 2014.				

Table 2: Frequencies and percentage distribution of respondents regarding their perception of patriarchal norms.

e_{ij} and e_{ij} = Represent the observation and expected values

Results and Discussion

Frequency and percentage distributions regarding women political participation

Patriarchal norms: Pukhtoon society is male dominated society where women work in subordination to male. The division of labor is obvious where male performs job outside home and female are in charge of household checks. Frequencies and percentage distribution of respondents about their perception of patriarchal norms in Pukhtoon society is given in Table 2.

The result shows that majority of 95.6% respondents agreed that patriarchy is practiced in Pukhtoon society while 4.4% said that patriarchy is not practiced in Pukhtoon society. In patriarchal structure the involvement of women in political process is totally related with choices of men. Due to this male domination in society women are always in the lower step of the ladder and maximum preference is given to men as compare to women [9]. Similarly in response to possibility of gender equality in Pukhtoon society, 71.2% respondents agreed with the statement while 28.8% respondents were against the statement. According to the status of women in society and even in a family is not considered to be satisfactory and thus women have been discriminated in all walks of life [7].

In reply of the question, "male members encourage female participation in decision making at household level", 80% respondents replied in Yes, 19% replied in no, while 1% had no idea about this statement. Lower status of women in political participation and representation of the women in political institution are surely controlled by men, whereas at household level women's participation is encouraged [10]. In addition 65.4% respondents agreed with the statement that patriarchy is responsible for deprivation of women of their rights, 34.1% disagreed and 0.5% respondents did not answer. The result was supported by Rabbani that Owing to the patriarchal structure of the society decisions are taken by the men i.e., father or husband [10]. Man is considered to be the legal representative and

Attributes\ Statement	Response	Women political participation			Total	Chi square (χ^2) P value
		Yes	No	Don't Know		
Patriarchy is practiced in Pukhtoon society	Yes	149 (72.7%)	46 (22.4%)	1 (0.5%)	196 (95.6%)	=44.377 (.000)
	No	0 (0.0%)	7 (3.4%)	2 (1.0%)	9 (4.4%)	
	Don't Know	149 (72.7%)	53 (25.9%)	3 (1.5%)	205 (100%)	
Gender equality is possible in Pukhtoon society.	Yes	145 (70.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.5%)	146 (71.2%)	X^2=182.757 (.000)
	No	4 (2.0%)	53 (25.9%)	2 (1.0%)	59 (28.8%)	
	Don't Know	149 (72.7%)	53(25.9%)	3 (1.5%)	205 (100%)	
You like women in their employment decisions.	Yes	149 (72.7%)	26 (12.7%)	0 (0.0%)	175 (85.4%)	X^2=98.975 (.000)
	No	0 (0.0%)	27 (13.2%)	3 (1.5%)	30 (14.6%)	
	Don't Know	149 (72.7%)	53 (25.9%)	3 (1.5%)	205 (100%)	
Only the male members of your family participate in voting	Yes	149 (72.7%)	16 (7.8%)	0 (0.0%)	165 (80.5%)	X^2=133.887 (.000)
	No	0 (0.0%)	37 (18.0%)	3 (1.5%)	40 (19.5%)	
	Don't Know	14 (72.77%)	53 (25.9%)	3 (1.5%)	205 (100.%)	
Male members encourage female participation and decision making at household level.	Yes	149 (72.7%)	15 (7.3%)	0 (0.0%)	164 (80.0%)	X^2=268.88 (.000)
	No	0 (0.0%)	38 (18.5%)	1 (0.5%)	39 (19.0%)	
	Don't Know	149 (72.7%)	53 (25.9%)	3 (1.5%)	205 (100%)	
Organizations are working in your area to safeguard women's interests.	Yes	25 (12.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	25 (12.2%)	X^2=114.851 (.000)
	No	124 (60.5%)	50 (24.4%)	0 (0.05)	174 (84.9%)	
	Don't Know	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.5%)	3 (1.5%)	6 (2.9%)	
Women have opportunity to bring change in society.	Yes	121 (59.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.5%)	122 (59.5%)	X^2=107.865 (.000)
	No	28 (13.7%)	53 (25.9%)	2 (1,0%)	83 (40.5%)	
	Don't Know	149 (72.7%)	53 (25.9%)	3 (1.5%)	205(100.0%)	
Male dominancy as ensured through keeping women in subordinate position.	Yes	125 (61.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	125 (61.0%)	X^2=157.334 (.000)
	No	24 (11.7%)	41 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	65 (31.7%)	
	Don't Know	0 (0.0%)	12 (5.9%)	3 (1.5%)	15 (7.3%)	
Women can contribute to the development of the society like men.	Yes	149 (72.7%)	6 (2.9%)	0 (0.0%)	155 (75.6%)	X^2=241.247 (.000)
	No	0 (0.0%)	47 (22.9%)	2 (1.0%)	49 (23.9%)	
	Don't Know	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.5%)	
Patriarchy is responsible for the deprivation of women from their rights.	Yes	134 (65.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	134 (65.4%)	X^2=211.237 (.000)
	No	15 (7.3%)	53 (25.9%)	2 (1.0%)	70 (34.1%)	
	Don't Know	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.5%)	

Source: Survey, 2014.

Table 3: Association between patriarchy and women in political participation.

authority while the women have been restricted to their homes only. Further 80.5% respondents view was only the male members of the family participate in voting, the response of 19.5% respondents was in no. Furthermore, 85.4% liked women in their employment decisions, while 14.6% respondents negated this statement. According to the report of UNDP all over the globe, employment and political activities are referred to sex and gender where men are responsible and are assigned the superior positions while women are not supposed to have the same. Women, therefore, are not ready to take part in country's politics [4]. They are even not aware about the political parties and the political system of the country.

Moreover, 75.6% respondents said that women can contribute to the development of the society like men, while 23.9% disagreed with this statement and 0.5% had no knowledge about it. For women empowerment, their political participation has a central role in the analysis, organization and mobilization of resources for social change in society [11]. On further elaboration 12.2% respondents perceived that organizations are working in their area to safeguard or protect women interests, 84.9% respondents did not agree with it while, 2.9% respondents were not aware about it. Results are supported by Bari that learning process and institutional organizations also support male dominance and patriarchal society [12]. Furthermore, majority (59.5%) respondents stated that women had the opportunities to bring positive change in society while 40.5|% respondents negated this statement. Women's empowerment not only plays its role to build a strong nation but it is also is an indicator of the brave society [13].

In addition, 61% of the respondents stated that male dominance is ensured through keeping women in subordinate position, while 31.7% respondents answered in negation and the rest of 7.3% respondents had no idea about it. Democracy has a vital role in creating awareness about political process and women empowerment. This situation is not possible without a strong democratic political system. Through voting people can put pressure on the government for getting desirable objectives. Women empowerment should be shaped as a well linked with mass movement for the purpose of bring change in already existing social system and to build a social structure where women are not in subordinate position. The women political participation is the only key of this mass movement [14].

The association of patriarchal norms and women political participation

Patriarchy refers to male dominance in a family system. In most of societies biological dominance of male are translated in their dominance in general societal activities and projected in local culture. Gender based division of labor is a clear example of the phenomenon where women are limited to specific reflected activities. Outside home activities like political participation are especially denied to women. Association of patriarchal norm with women's political participation is given in Table 3 and explained below.

Association of practicing patriarchy in Pukhtoon society and women political participation was highly significant (P=0.000). In

patriarchal societies, like one in the study area, women are deprived of political participation due to male dominance. Women cannot participate in political activities and are not allowed to vote by their male family members. These findings are supported by the report of Eisenstein that in patriarchal structure the involvement of women in political process is totally related with choices of men [4]. Due to this male domination in society women are always in the lower step of the ladder and maximum preference is given to men as compared to women. The study further indicated that the possibility of gender equality in Pukhtoon society had highly significant (P=0.000) association with women political participation. There is a clear cut gender based division of labor in the society; therefore, most of economic and political decision making rests in male family members. The women have to follow the instruction of male family head's decisions regarding political favors or disfavors. According to Clem, the status of women in society and even in a family is not considered to be satisfactory and thus women have been discriminated in all walks of life [7].

Furthermore, admirations for women's involvement in their employment decisions had a highly significant association with women's political participation (p=0.000). Similarly, involvement of male members in voting process also had a highly significant association with women's political participation (p=0.000). It is obvious from the results that in most cases only the male members of the society had the authority for making decisions related to women's employment or their participation in poling vote that has strong influences on women's political participation. The findings were clarified by the report of UNDP in 2005 that all over the globe employment and political activities are referred to sex and gender where men are responsible and are assigned the superior positions while women are not supposed to have the same. In response to this scenario women are not ready to take part in country's politics [4]. They are even not aware about the political parties and the political system of the country due to which women are not interested in the country's politics. They have no knowledge about political system like voting.

The study further explored significant association between women political participation and male members encourage female participation in decision making at house hold level (P=0.000). Similarly a significant association was established between women political participation and organizations protecting women rights (P=0.000). Learning process at various institutions and organizations also supports male dominance and patriarchal values in the society and discourage women empowerment [12]. The study further revealed that the available opportunities to women for bringing positive change in the society had a highly significant association with women political participation (P=0.000). According to Rubinqaim khan, the women empowerment not only plays its role to build a strong nation but it is also a sign of the brave society [13].

Furthermore, the opinion of respondents about women subordination due to male dominance had a highly significant association (P=0.000) with women political participation. According to Batliwala, a strong democratic system has a vital role to create awareness about political process and women empowerment [14]. Through voting people can put pressure on the government for getting desirable objectives. Women empowerment, therefore, should be shaped as well as linked with mass movement for the purpose to bring change in already existing social system and to build a social structure where women are not in subordinate position. The women political participation is the only key of this mass movement. Likewise, a highly significant association was found between contributions of women to the development of society like men and women political participation (P=0.000). For women empowerment, their political participation has a central role in the analysis, organization and mobilization of resources for social change in society [11].

The table also showed the role of patriarchy in deprivation of women from their rights in Pukhtoon society and this was also highly significant (P=0.000) with women political participation. The result was supported by Rabbani, that owing to the patriarchal structure of the society decisions are taken by the men i.e., father or husband [11]. Man is considered to be the legal representative and authority while the women have been restricted to their homes only.

Conclusions

It is concluded that from these results that patriarchy is the dominant cultural pattern where women are in subordinate position and look at male family members regarding general decisions and even in some very personal choices. Women exercise their freedom in limited sphere of household activities. In addition, lack of government policies and deficiency in women decision making power worsen the state of women participation in political activities.

It is concluded that Pukhtoon society is male dominant. There is a huge gender based gap which deprives women in their employment and voting process. Although women can bring positive change in society but they are always in subordinate position and having no access to their rights. Household activities are the only domain in which they dominate male group.

Limitations of the Study

Lower sample size is the limitation of this study. Due to limited number of respondents of mentioned characteristics the researcher was left with no option but to opt for a smaller sample size.

Recommendations

In light of study findings it is recommended to secure women basic rights of expression and participation under the umbrella of equity principals and encourage women political participation in election and legislative representations through allotting reserve seats for them. In addition, whenever evidences of disallowing women from voting process are established the election results should be cancelled. Furthermore, some case specific studies relating to reasons of women's nonparticipation in political processes should be conducted.

References

1. http://www.un.org/popin/unfpa/taskforce/guide/iatfwemp.gdl.html

2. Arab N, Hafeez RC (2011) Gender and development: Socio-cultural, economic, religious and political impediments in women's empowerment and gender development (A case study of Malakand division KPK, Pakistan). PUTAJ Human Soc Sci 18: 45.

3. Khan N (2011) Socio-cultural impediments to women political empowerment in Pukhtoon society.

4. UNDP (2005) Political and legislative participation of women in Pakistan: Issue and perspectives. Islamabad: UNDP.

5. Arab N, Ibrahim M, Waqar A (2012) Socio-cultural impediments to women political empowerment in Pukhtoon society. Acad Res Inter 3: 1.

6. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) (2003) Strengthening women's political participation in Indonesia. Ameepro. Jakarta, Indonesia. 8.

7. Clem T (2002) Children and economic development: Family size, gender preferences and human capital formationtheory and Indian cases. Working papers on social economics, policy and development, School of Economics. The University of Queensland, Queensland.

8. http://www.weforum.org/events/world-economic-forum-annual-meeting-2008

9. Lois B (1985) Reviews: Hester Eisenstein, Contemporary feminist thought, Allen and Unwin, London, 1984. Thesis 10: 11.

10. Rabbani IM (2011) Pakistan affairs (18th edn), Zahid Basher printing press, Lahore 2: 552-553.

11. Anonuevo MC, Namtip A (1995) Report of the international seminar held at UIE, Hamburg, 27th January-2nd February, 1993. UNISCO Institute for Education, Germany.

12. Bari F (2005) Women political participation. Issues and challenges. Gender and Balance 1: 4.

13. Khan R (2015) The Daily News: International women Day, 8th March, Islamabad, Pakistan.

14. Batliwala S (1995) Defining women's empowerment: A conceptual framework education for women's empowerment. ASPBAE Position Paper for the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing and Asia-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, New Delhi.