Stereotypes as Cause of Gender Inequality in Pakistan

Abstract:

This research paper is based on the study of stereotypes that are deeply rooted within our society for several years and are the key factor for causing gender inequality in Pakistan for women. This stereotypic behavior of our society majorly affects the women and is the cause of their discrimination in all aspects of life, women working inside the house and also the female employers outside the house. This is what the basic objective of this study is, to determine the pivotal relationship of stereotypes with the gender inequality. This study also subjects to explore the impact of stereotypes on females such as in the form of media's impact on stereotypes, course and books reflecting male dominancy and female inferiority as the causes of inequality. The qualitative method has been used for the study to indicate what and how these rigid stereotypes have an impact on the lives of females and how they are the root cause of gender inequality in Pakistan, highlighting as one the biggest social issues as well. This research paper is going to put a light on how these typical and firm ideas have negative impact on thinking, behavior, values, customs and traditions of Pakistani society. Also the study enlightens how gender inequality and less opportunities for women is a cause of socio-economic deprivation in Pakistan. Media and literature also plays a negative role for practicing stereotypes unintentionally and these cannot be eradicated from our society easily but they can be modified with the possible recommendations discussed in the paper.

Introduction

Despite women growing their presence in the labor force and educational institutions in the last few decades, women remain socially marginalized and underrepresented within, as well as, outside of households in Pakistan. This happens not only in Pakistan but also in other underdeveloped countries too but Pakistan regarding this issue is one of the most highlighted countries. There are not one or two reasons for playing the role of gender discrimination but a list of reasons. The issues causing gender inequality include factors such as stereotypes, prejudice and racism that motivates a person to discriminate. Our society has been following stereotypes for a long time. The behavioral and educational misconception are the major reason that run against women empowerment as well as equality for them. World is developing day by day but still our society is badly tangled in some firm and typical customs and followings. And the practice of stereotypes is one of them. Stereotypes are rigid ideas about something specific, imposed to a specific gender or groups of people because of their race, nationality or sexual orientation. Females are mostly suffered by these stereotypes because nearly all the stereotypes are related to them such as they are weak, they cannot participate in the society as majorly as men, and they are not brave. These stereotypes lead to gender discrimination causing unfair treatment of women, denial of opportunities and violation of their rights. This research paper is based upon the study of stereotypes and how they lead their role in gender discrimination in Pakistan Stereotypes are deep entrenched in our society and we cannot wipe out them but we can amend them, if we want to. These are immovable pattern related to a particular gender or anything. We still follow them, consciously or unconsciously too, and tend to specify them to something. Its impacts are both, negative and positive, but mostly negative. If we cannot eradicate them, then we should modify it with the passage of time. Almost every time

it becomes the source of inequality.

Stereotypes bring imbalance, since a significant part of these generalizations are connected to females that causes persistent male-female gap in educational opportunities as well as in social and gender norms, which interfere with the ability of girls and women to take advantage of the opportunities. In a survey held to discover the victims of stereotypes, 61.5% people believed that yes stereotypes are the cause of inequality for women. In our society, people mostly favor men more than women in all aspects of life. Women face discrimination due to a lot of reasons. They face disparity in health care services, social insurance administrations, education, job opportunities, private sector etc. In any case, it isn't realized that why she faces this all. Numerous associations, organizations and so on are working for their value/equity in all spaces. Yet at the same time she faces discrimination in all aspects. So, I incorporated this question to realize that in every one of the reasons of gender discrimination in Pakistan, what the part of stereotypes is. Stereotypes are just considered as other things that people follow such as myths, superstitions etc. After reading many of the articles and writings I have found that stereotypes surely affect the lives of women in different aspects. It is the modern age of science and technology with people having broad aspects in their minds now that have started to let them become more aware, conscious and rationale. People are trying not to follow such things that is why now people believe that stereotypes do affect the lives of people and significantly the females. A contributing component to the absence of enhancement in females' socioeconomic status is the diligent male-female hole in institutional opportunities as well as in social and sex standards, which meddle with the capacity of young girls and women to exploit the open doors in many developing countries.

Investment in females' edification is generally accepted to profit the general public through various financial and non-monetary channels. Given the proof of the private and social comes back to female education and different global agreements and national battles, it isn't astonishing that gender disparity in school enlistment has diminished in not only in Pakistan but also in many developing countries over the recent couple of decades. Schools fill in as the predominant institution for transmitting social learning and frames of mind, along these lines encouraging social change. Accordingly, some consider higher school enlistment of young ladies to diminish gender imbalance in the public eye, utilizing an expansive scope of markers, by moving social frames of mind for women. As a general rule, be that as it may, institutive establishments are not structured or commanded to move social frames of mind for ladies. Presentation to institutional instruction may not be sufficient to change gender attitudes and address sexual orientation stereotypes. As indicated by a few researchers, the classroom can incomprehensibly fill in as a place for supporting sex predisposition and stereotypes. For example, in Africa, usually the adage in the classroom that educators state 'young men require profession and young ladies require spouses'. School training can even be a negative affair. For example, religious schools frequently manage the socialization procedure in manners that especially drawback young ladies. Besides, there are pro-male of mind among instructors and sexual orientation lopsidedness in the educating staff. Similarly in Pakistan, stereotypes related to education such as women do not need any higher education because there ultimate end is to become the housewife only, are present that causes higher women illiteracy rate playing the role of gender inequality.

Research Questions:

1. How do stereotypes cause gender discrimination and impart injustice for females?
2. What are the effects of gender inequality on the country and within the society?
3. How can media, right education and government policies of women play the role for women empowerment and to eradicate the gender stereotyping?

Scope of the study:

This study is based upon the qualitative analysis of stereotypes that are still practiced in our society causing the elimination of rights for women in every aspect of life. In this research, I have mainly focused on the stereotypes and how they are the root cause of inequality and also how they affect the life of women as a whole. I have explored the bases of gender discrimination and my objective is to explore how better education can help women secure a better future for themselves, nurture a better position in the society and modify the stereotypes to decrease gender discrimination that is still happening everywhere in the country even after NGOs and other arrangements are working for the rights of women and their equal role in the society.

Literature Review:

Quillian (2014) stated the key factors for gender discrimination that include factors such as stereotypes, prejudice and racism that motivate a person to discriminate. Gender stereotypes are the root cause of inequality for women and they are unable to avail all the opportunities. Females are not even allowed to opt for a good education to secure a better career for themselves because their dominating men think that they do not need any education and that their sole purpose is to be the housewife. In Pakistan, female literacy rates and gross female enrollment are almost half that of Malaysia and Indonesia. The under-investment in females' education continues despite the fact that female education has many non-economic direct and indirect welfares. Education also matters meaningfully for the labor market performance of women in Pakistan. Solely owing to reservation policies, Pakistan have more female parliamentarians now than before.

In recent decades, government in Pakistan has responded to the existing gender inequality in social and employment market indicators by legislating new laws that target to improve women's access to education as well as job opportunities. In Pakistan, financial incentives have been provided to girls for continuing on to secondary school or delaying marriage. Constitution in Pakistan studied promise equality and the right to education and political participation for women. Pakistan has National Women Policies that emphasize equal rights for women in the socio-economic sphere. But at the same time, patriarchal mindsets frequently demand modifications that demoralize pro-women policies. For example, the practice of honor killings in Pakistan. It is one of the most prominent stereotypes in Pakistan that if a woman does something wrong or against the religion it is better to kill her in the name of honor. Some people with extremist mindsets do not even allow their women to go out for education and threaten them of their life if they raise a voice for their rights. And this lack of education due to gender stereotyping causes inequality for women affecting their whole life in a bad way. Most women have no formal skills, making this segment of the society vulnerable to injustice and discrimination. Providing women with skills and employment opportunities will help establish prosperity and economic growth and impart equality for them.

Bushra (2011) says that media shows a negative role on the subject of stereotypes. She deliberated how the harmful role of media is played by the media by its entertainment side such drams, morning shows etc. According to what Bushra said, there are a great number of NGOs working on raising alertness about women's rights in domestic and communal spheres and their depiction in news media. Unfortunately though, what is often ignored is another side of media which has a similar role, if not more, in propagating gender stereotypes. She believed that the entertainment side is essential because it causes and retains ideas and stereotypes through an unintentional process so by regulating by what is being displayed to the viewers, the gender inequality can slowly be decreased through it. These messages are far more capable than any analyst agitating to viewers to 'think' about women’s equal contribution in all surfaces of life. In this respect, television dramas are an essential tool to broadcast gender equality. Yet even though the quality of Pakistani dramas has augmented greatly after a 15-odd-year plummet, they still haven't turned out to be sensitized enough over the message they propel about a woman's domestic and public role. This struggle of how women are projected on TV is associated to the widespread glass ceiling in the administration of entertainment television channels. Moreover, to absence of powerful females at decision-making levels, female-unfriendly programming is also a consequence of women's self-perception. Further she said that it is about time we grow into pro-active and begin giving these channels our response. Their ratings, and thus profits, are reliant on us which makes us their customers. Next time you witness something which is offensive to women, whether it is a statement on a show or an act in a drama, take a few minutes to explore the channel's email/postal address and inscribe them a stern letter. Let them recognize we hope for better quality entertainment with positive action to alter this overwhelmingly biased set-up and we won't become peaceful for anything less. This could be our trivial involvement to try to bring a change in the society and for women’s right.

Chaudhary (2005) inspected that the situation of females in Pakistan is excessively disparate from every single Western nation. Female is considered as more fragile and unprotected in Pakistani society in all part, particularly in education, wellbeing, business, opportunity, job conditions, basic leadership and so forth. From most recent couple of decades much focus has been given to the inconveniences and issues of ladies everywhere throughout the world. The status of ladies and their job are vital determinants of advancement, not on the grounds that females contain practically 50% of the HR yet in addition since they need to hold up under the weight of the everyday battle of survival, particularly in creating nations. Numerous investigations perceive the relationship between gender discrimination and financials. There is an existing stereotype in our society followed by the people that it is worthless to spend money on women and that the only deserving species on Earth are the men, if money is spent on the education or career of a woman it will all go in vain. Keeping in view the significance of advancement, an exertion has investigated the effect of gender inequality in education in financial development in Pakistan, utilizing time chain auxiliary information and relapse examination. This investigation has discovered that sexual orientation imbalance in early educational levels and in the expansion of education impressively diminishes monetary development. Towards the end it is finished that girls and women should be furnished with better enlightening educational opportunities, enhanced medicinal services and recouped sustenance so as to enhance their monetary development rate to rise and it will lighten destitution at all dimensions in the nation. Sometimes education also leads to gender stereotyping as well because of the course or the textbooks that are given. They are mostly male dominating and male describing that imparts the unconscious gender stereotyping within the brains of students.

Zeenatunissa (2016) analyzed 7 English and Urdu dialect course readings at the auxiliary dimension. She found that in just about 15% to 20% cases ladies were depicted as driving characters, customary characters and subjects of accounts. In the meantime, of the 50 occupations referenced in the course readings, females were just allocated to 8. Their exercises were benefit situated, though men were in power-arranged exercises. Mirza directed by a wide margin the most extensive investigation on course book substance in Pakistan. It included upwards of 194 course readings from 4 regions, spreading over evaluations 1 to 10. Her examination found just 26.5% of women as focal characters. With respect to characters, just 15% were females in essential dimension reading material and 9.8% in auxiliary dimension books. Besides, just six qualities were only utilized for females as opposed to 59 for guys. Female traits were aloof (e.g., unobtrusive, honorable, dear, and so on.) while those for a male were intense (courageous, honest, and so forth.). In a later report in the Sindh territory, an examination observed 60% of the narratives to be ace male, while 76% of all pictures contained a male character. In the Punjab district, content examination of elementary school Urdu and English dialect course books uncovered comparable proof of gender stereotypes and 'gender apartheid' pictures. A similar investigation in Pakistan likewise affirms under portrayal of ladies, especially in Pakistani course books.

Gender stereotyping a practice of arbitrating male and females on the basis of their culturally suggested roles and then placing them in diverse categories bounds the potential of both males and females (Agars, 2004).These, particularly affect women's advancement in professional careers like administration, which is traditionally and historically believed as man's field as "Think manager Think male" is considered a worldwide phenomenon (Schien, 1998).Therefore, it is very vital to determine the role and impact of gender stereotypes on career advancement of females in management occupation or managerial positions. According to Schien (1978), Gender stereotyping has been defined as "the belief that a set of traits and abilities is more likely to be found among one sex than the other." This trend to attribute characteristics to gender can be stretched to occupations that are more likely to be apprehended by primarily men or women (Eaglyand Johnson, 1990; Norris and Wylie, 1995).

NUST (2018) turned its university into a smoking allowed campus but only for 'boys' but why? This recent activity by this institute has also promoted the gender stereotyping ad well. NUST allowed specific areas of smoking but only for the male students that caused some female students to come up and protest against the with their demand of having the equality that if a male student can smoke on the campus then a female student can also do the same, or just ban it for both. This stereotype that women should not smoke is prevalent in this society. Last year a picture of Mahira Khan with Ranbir Kapoor got excessively viral on social media leaving everyone to comment harsh and bad words for Mahira's character, health and lungs just because she had a cigarette in her hand but no concerns were shown for Ranbir Kapoor who was smoking beside her too. Someone said that smoking damage's a man health and ruins a women's character and our society as well as the institutions are proving it to be right. Smoking is injurious to health but why is this essential section of information thrown only at females whilst majority of the men smoke. Does smoking damages the heath but sees the gender first? Or do men have special powers that will stop them from coughing up their lungs in the near future? We live in a country where women are frequently harassed, they feel unsafe in public areas, they are killed in the name of 'honor' and under these circumstances, a prestigious university is threatening to call only the females' guardians if they are caught smoking or in other words if they are caught protesting for their rights? Smoking is a health issue for men but a moral issue when it comes to women because "Aurat kay paas lungs ke jaga bhi khandan ke izzat lagi hoti

hai”. If smoking has bad health effects on men then on women as well and if moral harm on women than on men as well.

A stereotype also exists that if women are not married at their earliest they will not be able to give birth to new born, learn how to run a home and will remain unmarried. Also some people think that girls are not worth to be kept home and worth spending money on, so, they should get married as early as possible and sent to the next home. This has caused early marriage problems in Pakistan leading to pregnancies at immature age that causes a lot of problems including the premature birth, higher risk of child mortality and pregnancy induced hypertension. Education as important for women as for men but still almost half of the population of women still grows up uneducated. A girl’s desire of higher education is questioned and mostly suppressed. Our country is still included in the list of under developing countries because the women of our countries are left behind in every aspect of life.

Malala Yousafzai (2012) defied the Taliban and was shot in the head by them for demanding equal rights for women and their education. After undergoing a long period of treatment and rehabilitation she recovered and decided to become a women activist and fight until each and every women gets the education she wants. In 2014, Malala Youafzai was announced as the winner of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize for her struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education. Malala like many of the other women proved at the age of 17 that women are no less than men and that they should be given the equal rights and education. These stereotypes related to women have been indulged between our people for hundreds of years and it is actually difficult to eradicate them from our society but if women are given a better education and empowered to better ranks in all aspects of life they can mold the stereotypes that are against them. This is how it makes education as the key factor for women equality.

Modification of stereotypes:

People take religion strictly and rigidly in our society whereas our religion is not that strict as it is supposed by a large portion of people. It is the mindset of people of how they understand their religion. According to a research almost half of the people believe that stereotypes are based on religion and racial basis and that is why it is difficult to erase them.

Mind sets of the people should be brought about to a change because our mindsets have become too rigid regarding for females only. Secondly, the array of socialization should also be changed. We treat our generation in such a way that favors only one gender. We need to change our manner of socializing so that the new generation is brought in a different way that they never think of gender inequality and biasness. The level of education should also be developed in order to increase the literacy rate in Pakistan especially for women. More educated women will take part in different aspects of life causing the gender stereotyping to fade away with the passage of time. There should be equality for both male and female in every house so that no one practices such stereotypes again. If keeping in view our religious views, people are highly recommended to follow their holy book. If we follow these suggestions, we can change the structure of society timely and keep on removing these gender stereotypes because it affect the life of women in a bad way. So, we should try to educate our society especially women, change the pattern of society, pattern of socialization etc. so that there can be equality.

Conclusion:

After reading different research papers, articles, books and journals it concluded that stereotypes surely affect our lives in a depraved way, specially and mostly the lives of women. Stereotypes are currently present in various expressions of gender inequalities in rural as well as urban areas. Women face gender discrimination due to different stereotypic behavior of our society in almost every aspect of life including education, healthcare and it is at the peak when it comes to social behavior. Stereotypes have a negative impact on the individual perception of woman doing a job. Parents' education, family background, education and the understanding of mindsets have an impact on the female's life as an individual's socialization. The government has to play a significant role in this regard of gender inequality by allocating quotas for women jobs and also creating new policies for women. Women because of these stereotypes face inequality in different aspects of life such as education, healthcare services, job opportunities, private sectors etc. Many governmental and private organizations are working for gender inequality in Pakistan but that is not enough. It is the time that government starts to create new, regulatory policies for women to eradicate the gender discrimination and let the society know that women are not less than any other man. People should develop to higher education including women and spread awareness among the people about the rights of women, media should also play a positive role and show equality to its viewers rather than male dominancy and the practice of stereotypes, so that these rigid ideas and generalizations can be removed from our society.