

Patriarchy and Decision Making Power of Women

Abstract

The aim of the study was to observe the influence of patriarchy on decision making power of women. In studying the vast and varied impact of patriarchy on women the researchers applied egalitarian feminist theory with conflict approach in explaining gender inequalities faced by women and the privileges enjoyed by men in every aspect of life in society. The area of research consisted of two universities of federal capital, International Islamic University Islamabad and National University of Modern Languages. The study was conducted by survey method and 120 female students were selected through random sampling technique. In order to collect information a self-administered questionnaire was applied as a tool of data collection. The findings of research showed that women though claiming to have rights to make their own decisions related to education, mobility, recreation and marriage but they always take permission from someone close to them. For Instance, they can choose university of their own choice but it should not be co-education. Hence it can be concluded that they are almost always kept in darkness of their true rights and liberty, left just to fanaticize about their empowerment and independence.

Keywords: *Patriarchy; male dominance; decision making power, Pakistani women, women empowerment*

INTRODUCTION

Patriarchy is the rule of the father who is also known as patriarch which means a male member of household or society (Mitterauer & Sieder, 1982). It can be said that having a ruling position has always been in the roots of human beings

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since the prehistoric age (Walby, 1990). This need of power may have led to the structure of patriarchy which is seen today. Patriarchy also covers entire structures of domination and exploitation that affect women's position in society (Fredric, 1982). The social position of women in decision making power may include marital decision, education, job, child rearing, financial and household budgeting in Pakistani society whereas patriarchs are renowned as the guardian of women and thus the decision-making power is bestowed in male hands (Sah, 1986). Noone & Stephan (2008) introduced a concept of patriarchal dividend to explain the possible social practice of men in financial power. Connell and Connell (2005) explains that in patriarchal societies various benefits are enjoyed by men and these benefits might include higher income, economic control, and easier access to positions of personal and institutional power, authority, ruling figure, greater social status and personal security, control over vast and various decisions within and out of family unit. This economic control of men and women's economic dependency over men leads to strengthen patriarchy (Scott, 2009). Patriarchy is a social concept in which men and masculine qualities are appreciated more highly than women and feminine qualities. A patriarchal society thus creates gender inequities, oppressing women (Belknap, 2007).

Society has a specialized set of roles for both male and female which creates biasness (Shah, 1986). Patriarchy is not a persistent or static which means gender relations are dynamic and complex that have changed over the periods of history. In societies where social and economic relations are structured by patrilineage, patriarchy is generally associated with higher levels of gender inequality and male domination (De Moor and Van Zanden, 2010). Patriarch in the family controls all the financial activities and decisions of family whether it relates to women's education, household groceries or women's recreational choices (Chakaravati, 2004). Economic dependency is the main cause of reinforcement of patriarchy and this has been socialized in children since their childhood that is for boys to be the head of the family and having their independent economic status (Wentworth, 2004). In countries like India and Pakistan, doctors want a father's signature on a permission form before performing serious procedures on a child or even the woman herself (Desai and Johnson, 2005). In Pakistan, most of the families do not allow their daughters to study in co-education; even sometimes restrict them to select a subject of their own choice (Briere & Runtz, 1988). In some families, it is considered a symbol of dishonor if women are involved in some paid work. The primary right to take basic decision relating to their own lives is not given to them. Marriage against choice is a deep rooted social problem which is the violation of an individual's right. The organization of marriage has gotten much

importance due to the lack of women's control over income and property (Hapke, 2013). The cultural norms, traditional practices, so called religious beliefs and social values of a patriarchal society and laws in Pakistan place the women in a submissive role create gender based oppression. A patriarchal society thus creates gender inequalities and oppresses women (Walby, 1990).

The current research aims at pointing out the verge of equality between men and women as Mary Wollstonecraft, in her book "A Vindication of the Rights of Women", makes it clear that both woman and man are equally free, and woman and man are equally submissive in exercising of their responsibilities to family and state and only through this way true freedom can be exercised. The essential reform is necessary for such equality is equal quality of education for woman, an education which recognizes her duty to educate her own children, to be equal partner with her husband in the family, and which recognizes that woman, like man, is a creature of both thought and feeling. All these points of views are similar to the points of present study that argues for the freedom of decision making power of women.

METHODOLOGY

Objective

The objective of current research paper was to inquire the influence of patriarchal structure of family on decision making power of women.

Research Design

The study was carried out using quantitative approach and survey research method was used to collect the information.

Area of Study

The area of the current research included two distinct Universities of Islamabad i.e. International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) and National University of Modern Languages (NUML). The data was collected from the students of these two universities.

Sample

To limit the current research, the sample of 120 participants was taken, 60 from each University i.e. International Islamic University Islamabad and National university of Modern languages (NUML). A sample size or framework is a list of cases in a population or the best approximation of it. The current research aimed

at collecting the data from 120 respondents (students 60 females from each university by using simple random technique from 2 different universities of Islamabad.

Sampling Technique

Simple Random sampling is a first type of probability/random sampling which comprise the sample that is drawn out of sampling framework. In the present study list of students were taken from the 5 department of International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) to form a sampling framework. Thus 120 female students were selected through random sampling technique from different departments with the interval of 3. This type of sampling can help to control a simple probability sampling error. To conduct the current research, survey method with self-administered questionnaire was used to collect information from the respondents. A method that is foundational for inception of quantitative research tradition in sociology. For the current study, the questionnaire was pre-tested on 6-10 students for checking of mistakes and correction. Before the actual data collection pre-testing was done to check the authenticity of questionnaire. After pre-testing few changes were incorporated in questionnaire for improving its viability (Presser, Blair. 1994).

Ethical considerations

Participants were ensured the privacy of their views and information to be kept highly confidential and only be used for research purpose specifically.

RESULT and DISCUSSION

Table 1: Socialization of patriarchy

Statements	Disagree	Agree	Total
Automatically adopt and follow their father/husband because they were brought up that way	41.7% (50)	58.3% (70)	100% (120)
Never question what they want because they like to follow their father/husband accept them to do	45.0% (54)	55.0% (66)	100% (120)
Respect for authority is something that all female/children needs to learn	25.8% (31)	74.2% (89)	100% (120)
Men and women both have different roles to play in society	24.2% (29)	75.8% (91)	100% (120)
It is right to treat girls differently from boys.	43.3% (52)	56.7% (68)	100% (120)
Satisfied with the concept that it is a male dominating society	62.5% (75)	37.5% (45)	100% (120)
Father/husband is more important than their personal goals	27.5% (33)	72.5% (87)	100% (120)

Table 1 demonstrates socialization of patriarchal domination in society. Among all the, university students who participated in the study mentioned in the above statements that they (53%) have internalized male domination in their life as they automatically follow their father's decisions as 55% never question to their male members of family. The 74% participants agree with that children learn respect father authority while 76% agree that men and women have different roles in society. Furthermore, 57% agree that girls should be treated differently and 73% also agree with those fathers and husbands are more important than their personal goals. The last 38% satisfied with the concept of male dominating society. Similar with the argument Walby (1990) considered patriarchy as the building block of feminist approach thus reflects the oppression and deprived position of women in social institutions. Parker and Reckdenwald (2008) argued here that patriarchy is a construct formulated by the family institution of society where fathers are the head of the household. Within these families', fathers get the sole accountability

of the welfare of the family and authority over their women and children. Hagan, John believes family socialization is responsible for the creation of patriarchy.

Table 2: Decision making in education

Fathers agree with the following:	No	Yes	Total
Women can decide their education	30% (26)	70% (84)	100% (120)
Women can choose the subject of their own choice	21% (25)	79% (95)	100% (120)
Women can study in co-education	32% (39)	68% (81)	100% (120)
Women can get higher education	10% (11)	90% (109)	100.0% (120)
Women can study in the university of their own choice	25% (29)	75% (91)	100.0% (120)
Educated women can lead more prosperous and successful life in terms of decision making	48% (37)	52% (63)	100.0% (120)

Table 2 reveals about the impact of patriarchy on decision making power regarding education of women. The 70 % participating students mentioned that their fathers agree with their decision of education, while 79% participants mentioned that their fathers agree with choosing their discipline and 68% further explain that their father agrees on their decision on entering in Coeducation University. 90% women can get higher education and 75% in their own choice of university. 52% agree that educated women can lead more successful life in terms of decision making in life. The previous studies reported that in Pakistan, most of the families do not allow their daughters to study in co-education; even sometimes restrict them to select a subject of their own choice (Briere and Runtz, 1988). The pattern of thinking in the current study reveals different stories that in matter of education, fathers are paying attention to the decisions of their daughters in context of education.

Table 3: Decision making in mobility related issues

Fathers agree with the following:	No	Yes	Total
Daughter can stay out late	81% (99)	19% (21)	100% (120)
Daughter can go on stay trips	60% (73)	40% (47)	100% (120)
Daughter can go out with friends	51% (61)	49% (59)	100% (120)
Daughter can move with their cousins	40% (48)	60% (72)	100% (120)
Daughter can visit their relatives	39% (46)	61% (74)	100% (120)
Daughter can go out with female friends	56% (67)	44% (53)	100% (120)

Table 3 shows that 81% participating students are not allowed to stay out late and further 60% are not allowed on stay trips. Almost 50% female students can go out with friends while nearly 60% participating students can visit to their relatives and cousins. The 56% participants are not allowed for going out with female friends. This is to argue that family keeps control over the mobility of the women and maintain inequalities. The feminist perspective, along with traditional thought in general, focuses on patriarchy as the basis of gender differences in all behavior (Wollstonecraft, 1792). Family relations are distinguished as more or less patriarchal by the amount of authority the mother and father has in relation to one another. In strong patriarchal families, the fathers enjoy more power than mother, especially when the mother does not have any independence financially. Within these families, sons and daughters are socialized to take on gender roles like those of their parents. Though girls can take decision of their education but at the same time, their mobility is controlled through putting different restriction while permitting education within the higher education institutions. They cannot make small decision of their daily routine activities. Walby (1990) argued that the nature of control and suppression of women varies from one society to the other as it differs due to the differences in class, caste, religion, region, ethnicity and the socio-cultural practices.

Table 4: Decision making in financial issues

Statements	No	Sometimes	Yes	Total
Participants are given money on daily basis	39% (49)	31.7% (38)	19% (33)	100% (120)
Participants are given money on monthly basis	21.3% (25)	16.7% (20)	62.5% (75)	100% (120)
Participants can do job	18.7% (22)	18.3% (22)	63% (76)	100% (120)
Participants can spend money on their hobbies	13% (15)	31.7% (38)	65% (67)	100% (120)
Participants family's financial resources effects their family decisions regarding their education	40% (48)	28.3% (34)	31.7% (38)	100% (120)
Participants family's financial resources effects their recreational decisions	37% (44)	38.3% (46)	25% (30)	100% (120)

The table 4 demonstrates on decision making on financial related matters. Almost 20% are given money on daily basis and the rest on monthly basis while 63% can do job and 65% can spend money on their hobbies. Most of the time they agree that decisions of utilizing resources of the family effect their education and recreational activities. If the family is in crisis, they cut their money and that effect their education. Marxist theorists view patriarchy in the household as class relation where husband being a breadwinner and economic source of the family gets to be the ruling class leaving women as subordinate level ruled by male with no paid job and unlimited amount of work including cooking, cleaning and particularly child rearing. The limitation of power experienced by women in society can also be considered as a part of patriarchy conveyed by the state.

Table 5: Preferences on choices and consent of women

	To some extent	To great extent	Not at all	Total
Participants had disagreements or conflict with their father	36.7% (44)	8.3% (10)	55.0% (66)	100% (120)
Participants feel close to other people rather than their father	23.3% (28)	21.7% (26)	55.0% (66)	100% (120)
Participants feel free to do things their own way	57.5% (69)	25.0% (30)	17.5% (21)	100% (120)
Participants had to do things against their will/choice	41.7% (50)	20.8% (25)	37.5% (45)	100% (120)
Father tell them what to do and what not to do	41.7% (50)	25.8% (31)	32.5% (39)	100% (120)
Father/husband insulted them in front of others	18.3% (22)	15.0% (18)	66.7% (80)	100% (120)
Participants fall into trouble because of going out with friends	29.2% (35)	10.0% (12)	60.8% (73)	100% (120)

Table 5 illustrates the preferences on choices and consent of women in their life. Only 8% participants can disagree with their fathers and 45% feel never close to their fathers. Twenty never feel free to do things on their own way and further 42% to some extent do things against their will. Sixty six participants do what their father tell them wrong and right. Sixty seven mentioned that fathers never insulted in front of others. 61% never fell into trouble because of friends. It is to argue that women in their routine activities can not disagree with their fathers then how can women argue about the marriage choice of her own which is deep rooted social problem in Pakistani society. Hapke (2013) argued that marriage is important due to lack of women's control over income and property. Traditional practices, cultural norms and social values and lack of implementation of laws in Pakistan place the women in submissive position and that create gender oppression.

Table 6: Self-decision making

	Frequency	Percentage %
Education	32	26.7
Recreation	06	5.0
Education and Job	04	3.3
Education and Recreation	12	10.0
Education and Marriage	12	10.0
Education, Job and Recreation	10	8.3
Education, Recreation and Marriage	42	35.0
Job, Recreation and Marriage	02	1.7
Total	120	100

Table 6 demonstrates the frequency and percentage distribution of the decisions that female participants can take on their own. As 26 % of participants can take decisions related to education while 5% can take decisions related to recreation whereas 3% of the participants are free to take education and job related decisions at their own. 10 % participants can take decision related to education and recreation along with the same number of participants who take education and marriage related decisions at their own. 36% participants can make educational, recreational and marriage related decisions on their own. Leaving only 2% of the participants who can take job, recreational and marriage related decisions on their own.

CONCLUSION

At the end, it is to conclude that women do not considered themselves as productive part of the society as they still hold patriarchal mind which is maintained through their own stereotypical thoughts that they can never question to the authority, automatically follow the decisions of the father, men and women have different roles and based on those roles, women should be treated differently and the honor of the father is more important than their own goals which create and sustain suppression on women. The socialization is too strong among the women that they cannot think of going against the will of their father or disagree with them and what their fathers told them wrong and right in life, they follow the same path even when they are physical in distance from their fathers. The question arises if women in their routine activities can not disagree with their

fathers then how can women argue about the marriage choice of her own which is deep rooted social problem in Pakistani society. Although there is a change in the decision making in context of women's education and women are given space in entering higher education and selecting their disciplines and women agree that they can lead a more successful life through getting education. Most of the time they also pointed out that decisions of utilizing resources of the family effect their education and recreational activities. If the family is in crisis, that effect their education. Though women can take decision of their education but at the same time, their mobility is controlled through putting different restriction while permitting education within the higher education institutions.

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