

Women Today: Comparative Sociological Juridical Research on Gender Equality

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This book brings the comparative analysis of gender inequalities from fourteen different countries including Cuba, Haiti, India, Iraq, Iran, Italy, Ivory Coast, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Tunisia, United States, and Venezuela. This book also presents detailed information about gender discrimination in various sectors including family, education, and work. The evidence shows that 50 percent of the women feel unsafe in their own country. Moreover, most of the women highlighted that they have women-friendly policies but there is still needed to work on effective implementation with a legal framework. It's an eye-opener to find out what is happening happened women in different countries. I would like to talk specifically about Pakistan.

Pakistan is the fifth largest populous country in the world, with a population of about 220 million people now. The ratio of male to female is 106 to 100. Pakistan has ratified and signed several international commitments to achieve gender equality and provide safe and secure public places to gain equal opportunities for education,

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health, work, etc. These include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979 (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995, Sustainable Development Goals, etc. Furthermore, in the past two decades, a lot of pro-women legislation has been passed to protect women's rights in the country. The Constitution of the country also does not discriminate based on sex in any walk of life. But still, the status of women is at a very low pedestal in the country. Recently at the Gender Equality Index being published in 2023, Pakistan stands at 142 out of 146 countries.

As part of the surveys conducted for the Book "Women Today" in various countries, in the survey undertaken in Pakistan, 198 respondents participated, among which mostly were females. The majority (80%) of respondents fall in the age bracket of 18-30 years which means a major cluster of the respondents consists of young people. The rest about 20% participants are in the age range 31-56 years. There are no participants in the later age groups. 76% of respondents are students and are presently enrolled at different levels of education in educational institutions. The second biggest group (34%) is working people. The findings concluded that almost half of the participants (54%) believed that for a woman, it is difficult to live in Pakistan. Participants gave multiple reasons in support of their claim including patriarchal society, overall low female literacy, lack of safety and security, women's vulnerable position in public places, and limited freedom of free choice or decision-making on

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any matter of life i.e. work, education.

Life partner, preference given to males in a household, gender discrimination, no support of husbands at home, poverty, and unemployment. Further, the research found that there is a deep-rooted patriarchal perception of a “good woman”, the one who stays at home and takes care of her family and children; women are dependent on men for living and needs; women are weak, hence, they are dependent on men for their protection; the honor of the family is associated with women’s virginity; women bear dual burden of work; fewer job opportunities and the glass ceiling for women; and limited mobility of women. Gender imbalance in access to technological facilities and labor force participation in Pakistan was also reported by the participants. According to the GSMA’s “Mobile Gender Gap Report (2019), only 50% of Pakistani women owned a mobile phone as compared to 81% of men in the country. And the labor participation rate for women is 19% as compared to 81% for males. Moreover, for rural women, the opportunities for technological access and formal employment are very limited. In reality, we see that women are not given the rights that are promised to them by their religion and in the Constitution of the country. The majority of women in the survey agreed that women and men enjoyed different statuses in society and that preference is given to the baby boy even at the time of his birth.

The celebrations for the birth of the son are different from the daughter. The politics is also mostly

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male-dominated. It's very difficult for a woman to contest open elections. Women are selected through quota seats, which are provided to a party based on the seats they get in the general elections. I acknowledged the role of education, capacity building, and the use of modern technology as keys to improving the status of women in society. The government's role in passing pro-women legislation in the last decades is also appreciated. However, the deep-rooted conservative mindset of society is the major reason faced by women in growing upward in society. A massive awareness campaign is needed through media, specifically, social media to change the patriarchal attitudes and norms in Pakistani society.