Education and Empowerment of the Women in Rural Areas of Balochistan: The Views of Baloch Tribal Men

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Abstract

Education and empowerment are prerequisite for the advancement of women throughout the globe. However, women in Balochistan are living in the quagmire of centuries old traditions made by the Baloch tribal men of the local communities, which barricade their access to education and empowerment. This study examines that what are the views of Baloch tribal men about the education and empowerment of the women. This study has been conducted in sub Tehsil Punchpahee district Quetta (Rural Balochistan).The data has been collected through in-depth qualitative interviews of Baloch tribal men, who were selected through Purposive sampling. The interviews demonstrated that the socio cultural status of women, and consequently their access to education, remains deeply tied to Balochi Rawaj (tribal code). However, the ideas and stereotypes arising from their Baloch codes, culture, religion and politics were found to meaningfully shape men's views about women's participation in development of the community and education.

Key words: Education, Empowerment, Balochi code, Tribal Men, Balochistan

1. Introduction

The most important tool for the development of the human resource is education. It is considered a human right universally and is a significant component of opportunities for that must be provided for women's empowerment (Chaudhry & Rahman, 2009). Providing women with equal access to education is the most important for enabling them to take part in social, political, and economic life of a society. Providing education is undisputedly the most certain way of empowering an individual to enjoy his or her Human Rights (Lagachu, 2016; Salik & Zhiyong, 2014). Although nearly half the population of the world consists of women, they encounter discrimination in most spheres of life. They face difficulties in all aspects of social life because society is structured and functions on the basis of gender (Daraz, 2012; Khan, 2011; Naz, 2011). Globally 65 million girls-child are unable to start school, 100 million of them are withdrawn before they can complete primary education, 542 million women remain illiterate (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005).

In many ways, Pakistani women have a status that is different from that held by women in Western countries. Gender is the basis on which Pakistani society has been organized (Chaudhry & Rahman, 2009). This introduces inequalities in a broad spectrum of women's lives and leads to extensive suffering for girls. This has severe consequences for life in most developing countries. Pakistan suffers adverse consequences in the field of health, poverty, and fertility issues because of the lack of parity in providing education to girls (UNESCO, 2000; UNDP, 2011). In Pakistani society, several variables impact women's status. These include the economic class they are located in, the culture to which they belong and whether they are located in the rural and urban localities (Bukhari & Asim, 2013). Irrespective of their status, women continue to remain vulnerable and exposed to risks in general (Yousuf & Wani, 2016).

Research has established, albeit empirically, that the key factor in creating a vibrant, healthy, and economically developed community is the degree of formal education of women. Studies have confirmed that better educated women possess greater mobility and are economically relatively freer than others are. They have fewer children and are less exposed to physical violence (Alkire, 2010; Azhar, 2008; Latif, 2010).Gender development and women's empowerment issues have attracted considerable scholarly attention. This is visible from the large number of studies available on the subject (Chavis, 2011; Daulatzai, 2006; Khattak, 2004; Mann, 2005; Zulfacar, 2006).

Balochmen are depicted as having bravery, power, and strength. They are considered to be skillful and naturally dominant members of society. Women are inevitably depicted as any, submissive, weak, less intelligent and home-confined. In this male dominated society, women are humiliated, and pressurised and discouraged, receiving education. In this way, women are deprived of their rights to receive education (Kakar, Tobwal, Bareach & Sultan, 2016). In issues involving gender disparity, men are considered to be the key stakeholders. The Endeavour for advancement of gender equality will continue to encounter challenges unless a significant change is brought about in tribal man's concepts and practices of interfacing with women (Ruxton, 2004). One of the essential initiatives in achieving social justice is an alteration of men's concepts of the role of women in society. The privileges enjoyed by the privileged group, the man, can be challenged by such steps (Flood, 2001). This study explores and analyses the tribal man's perception of women's status and their role in the community with emphasis on their attitude toward the girl education. It is important to take note of their views and concerns.

It is also important to actively engage them in discussing women's issues by explaining to them the benefits they can achieve by providing women with equal opportunities for education and participation in family and community affairs (Barker, 2005). Opposing ideas that are derived from cultured, politics, and religion that impact will launch men's perceptions of the other gender are analysed in this article.

1. Background

Area-wise, Balochistan is the largest of the five provinces of Pakistan. Baloch are the largest of the four major ethnic groups living in the province. These groups and distinctly different identities in regard to their culture and language (Sajid &Sadiq, 2016). Ethnic Baloch and the closely related Brahui number nearly 6.8 million individuals. Five many of the resizing in Balochistan and compose nearly 55% of the province's population. Nearly 27% of the Balochhail outside Balochistan mostly in Sind (Vision 12, 2010).

Baloch tribes are nomadic. This society is tribal and based on the clan system. The drives are led by the Chief who is an influential person enjoying great prestige. It is a pivotal role in tribal life (Sajid &Sadiq, 2016; Sarparah & Sabir, 2016). The Baloch tribes are ethnocentric, have great respect and love for their own culture, and consider it to be the most superior (Majeed, 2010).As in most other tribal societies, Baloch girls are restricted to live within the boundries of a home. Their mobility and access to schools is very limited. In rural Balochistan, culture, society, and "religion" severely restrict the concept of women empowerment and education. This interpretation of Islam and the rigid mindset of male domination in the society are the principal obstacles to women empowerment (Kakar et al. 2016). Balochistan society is backward, tradition bound and highly conservative. These conservative and "religious" forces preventing women from redefining their roles and enters any move towards empowerment (Paterson, 2008).

Economic Survey of Pakistan ranks Balochistan is the least developed of the five provinces. Balochistan holds the lowest rank in Gender Parity Index (GPI). Women are the most vulnerable to adversities and are deprived of access to basic facilities such as education and health (Vision 21, 2010). Baloch women have a literacy rate that is the lowest in the world. It was estimated to be 20% in urban areas (Kakar et al. 2016). Tribal man exceeded their authority and do not allow women to take decisions. This violates the basic rights of women (Addison, 2008). The women are denied their rights in the names of "religion" and honor. It is very difficult to obtain data on incidences of physical violence against women in Pakistan in general and in Balochistan in particular. Chances of domestic violence are never reported or registered and are accepted as in no in the private sector (Bhatti, Jamali, Phulpoto, Mehmood & Shaikh, 2011).

In Balochistan cultural values and norms create issues in terms of lack of access to education, and unsupported environment for women numerous restrictions placed upon. Men far greater access to services such as education and health and will, it is cultural values and norms that prevent women from being able to seek help and restricting their mobility (Rai, Shah & Avaz 2007).Gender discrimination is generated because of popular misunderstanding of biological differences, "Islam" and traditions. Women do not usually the home except to attend school or visit relatives. Even then, they can only do so if they are accompanied by a male relative who may be a little child of 10 (Paterson, 2008). In such an adverse social environment, women become the weaker segment of society. They have little or no access to education due to the barriers erected by culture. They are forced to stay in close and not encouraged to compete with men in the outside world (Kakar et al. 2016).

2. Theory

Jagger's (1993) basic philosophy of women's liberation and equality is followed by liberal feminism today. Liberal feminists maintain that women do not enjoy rights equally as men do that, accept the basic structure of society as it exists today. Wollstonecraft considers that since women's inferiority is structured on her intellect and anatomy, it is unjust and incorrect. It is based on the inequalities found in the informal and formal laws as well as the inferior education women receive. Of primary concern to liberal feminists is the modification and the more of pre-existing social value. The primary concern of Liberal Feminism has provided equal and similar opportunities to women and men in the field of education (Daraz, 2012; Naz, 2011).

In the opinion of Liberal Feminists, women should have equal property voting rights as well as people and easy access to law and law enforcement agencies. They also stress on providing equal opportunities to men and women in the field of employment. They demand that influential positions being given to women in the private sector as well as in the government. They believe that discrimination is an outcome of the philosophy of male dominance and values that are male-oriented rather than the outcome of laws. Values lead to discrimination and bias against women (Daraz; 2012; Khan, 2011; Naz, 2011 ;).

Over time, liberal feminists and appeared as a united group. They represent the entire horizon of variables that are of interest to women. The city has been carried out in the locale where the Balochi code of life (Balochi Rawaj) is deeply ingrained. Studies reveal that the Baloch people believe that their activities should continue to be restrained by rigid social norms and that enjoyment of desires in somehow wrong (Anjum, Zia & Raza 2014). Baloch men do not want to violate their codes of life.

An analysis by Liberal Feminists reveals that in the community under study institutional network and norms are patriarchal and that traditionalism (Balochi Rawaj) governs the lives of Balochs. In such an environment will be institutions are male-driven and the laws are interpreted time, women are the inferior and supporting to men. Liberal Feminists argue that due to the male oriented biased social setup, women are discriminated in all aspects of social life, such as inequitable scales in job markets and with getting women into positions of authority in the professions, government, and cultural institutions. Decisions regarding women's empowerment and even their political affiliations are made by men. Women are deprived from contesting elections, casting their vote for enjoying their formal and legal entitlements (Lorber, 1997).The philosophy of Liberalism provides a technique for introducing change that may enable women to achieve equality with their male counterparts this is a productive approach in Baloch society.

The relational analysis of the ethnographic structure of this research and philosophy of Liberal Feminism reveals strong correlation. The choice of this researcher in selecting Liberal Feminism as the theoretical framework is justified.

3. Methodology

This paper uses qualitative research (in the form of description) approach to explore the views of the tribal men regarding the women empowerment and their education in the rural areas of Balochistan, Pakistan. Qualitative approach is more conducive when detailed analyses of the substance or quality of human experience and descriptions are required (Marvasti, 2003). It ensures an exhaustive understanding of the topic of research. This is especially so when an interview has being scheduled to obtain an in-depth explanation of the topic of research, especially where women are neither educated nor empowered.

Snowball (chain referral) method of sampling was adopted to select the interviewees. This method of sampling is particularly useful when a sensitive issue is being analysed. These issues could be matters that are usually considered private. Interviewees were selected by referrals from among people who were knowledgeable about the topic and knew others who could be useful for this research (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).The roles played by cultural and social contexts in all aspects of research such as formulating the research questions, data collection, writing and reporting the findings, are of interest to qualitative researchers (Bamberger, 1999 cited in Marvasti, 2003).

4. Data

The paper uses interviews as a measure for collection of information. The interviews conducted were semi structured comprising of open ended questions. Ten male informants were interviewed similar to the work of (Anigwe, 2014), as the objective is to know the views of tribal men. Merriam (2002) argued that it is important to select individuals from which one can learn a great deal about the issues central to the purpose of the study. Ten men were interviewed to understand and obtain the clear picture of the rigidity of the culture. In order to understand the views of men in regard to the position of women empowerment and education in their community, tribal men who were believed to be able to provide rich information on the topic were selected.

An aim of the sampling process was to find participants who were accessible, willing to provide information, could shed light on the issue being explored, and could provide valuable information to address the research questions of this study. Researchers differ as to what is an appropriate sample size (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2002). Interviews of ten men were recorded. The participants of this study were tribal men who were residing in rural Balochistan. These participants were contacted with the help and reference of the local person who had good knowledge about the lives of this community. The process continued until at least 10 respondents who were willing to participate in the study had been located. The participants were also selected on the basis of their willingness to discuss their knowledge of barriers which hindered them from being active in politics, their knowledge in the subject matter and their experiences. These individuals ranged in ages from 35 and over. These individuals were accessible and through casual conversations expressed a desire to voice their opinions and beliefs as a part of this study. These informants were from different tribal backgrounds.

They also included tribal leaders who implement and imposed their cultural customs and norms, which have an impressive impact on the lives of women. Most of the women had never been to school. Even men were not well educated. Some interviews were conducted in their homes and some others were conducted in the fields where they were working. The details of the informants have been mentioned in the table. In order to streamline the present study, a number of books, journals, and articles were reviewed. Relevant secondary data were also collected from published reports issued by various local, national, and international organizations.

5. Data Analysis

In Pakistani society, several variables impact women's status. These include the economic class they are located in, the culture to which they belong and whether they are located in the rural and urban localities (Bukhari & Asim, 2013). Irrespective of their status, women continue to remain vulnerable and exposed to risks in general (Yousuf & Wani, 2016). This section covers the main questions in detail; socio-cultural aspects are explored. This is followed by the general questions about the issue of women empowerment and education, according to Baloch culture and from the perspective of Baloch tribal men.

6. Result And Discussion

In this study most of the informants declared they were against women`s education and empowerment. As discussed above, Rawaj is a Baloch code of living. According to Baloch tribal system Balochi code is an important aspect of their social life. The interviewees views were ethnocentric'. They feared being dishonored. The law and security situation did not allow them to promote education and empower their women. Three major themes were found from the interviews of tribal men.

Firstly, Ethnocentrism is a global indication of behaviors and attitudes. One's own group is considered to be superior and virtuous. Any out-group is deemed to be inferior and contemptible (Axelrod & Hammond, 2003). Tribalism can be considered to be a "way of being" founded on combinations of reciprocal exchange, oral communication, kinship-based organisation, and analogical enquiry (James, 2006). Additionally, tribalism is believed to provide a degree of Social Security which proceeds to "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" (Gómez & Gasper, 2013).

Most of the informants were found Exocentrics. No change acceptance, roles are defined

"..... We are not so easy to accept change smoothly from any source, we are much possessive. We have our own centuries old social set up made by our own ancestors. We love and respect our culture we don`t want to bring any change in our lives, we consider it superior than all. And in my culture we are much possessive about our women, it will be undignified actioned to discuss the women related issues publicly, our women are confined inside home, we don't want to violate our cultural values by allowing women to live an independent life. In my culture roles are defined so we don't need to educate our women, as by the end of the day she has to serve family and her children so there is no reason for higher education of our girls".(interview 3)

Baloch people are very sensitive to their culture, their women's image and their identity, Moreover, due to the emotional attachment with the old traditional customs, norms made by the ancestors (late) the tribal men show more consciousness for the implementation of the old customs, it is also part of tribal set up that they are ethnocentric. It has been observed that people of the Baloch community, believe that their cultural patterns regarding women related norms and traditions are the superior and well managed than any other ethnic groups. They don't bear any other person for bringing change in their traditional setup in highly sensitive issues of women as women are their pride and honor and they do not even want to discuss openly in public or with any other ethnic group which is differ from them.

Ethnocentrism is an expression of favoritism for the in-group and hostility. The metrics of evaluation are such observable characteristics as physical features, language, accent, and religion. These are considered to indicate a common descent (Axelrod & Hammond, 2003) People of Balochistan give preference to personal adaptability, but only in in-group relationships and only personal stability is important for them in the out-group relationships. They also emphasis on quick results, but according to their tribal tradition, persistence is also very important for them. They believe in absolutes about good and evil in their tribal tradition, but it also depends on circumstances in out-group relationships (Anjum *et al*, 2014). The results are in line with (Majeed, 2010) who found that, in Balochistan, Baloch does not feel comfortable with other ethnic identities, they have love and respect for their own culture.

It is also observed that people of Balochistan are much possessive about their identity. In a socio- cultural set up when the tribalism is, in practice, there deprivation of the weakest segments of the basic rights is a common phenomenon. According to Interview 1

"Our tribal system is based on our cultural norms, which are made by our forefathers, tribal setup is the best way of survival of the people. In our tribe our lives and status is dependent on our prestige, which is directly linked with our women so, we cannot allow our girls to go to cities to get an education or do any job, in the case of any mishap whole tribe cannot face the rest of the society. As people will laugh at them and don`t want to make relation with our tribe. The culturally accepted principle that women must first fulfill their responsibility at home. Women have primary responsibility given by culture as wives and mothers". (Interview 1)

In Balochistan, due to gender discrimination and lack of facilities in rural areas people don't prefer girls to get an education. Education has remained a neglected field. This is the reason that male and female literacy rate is very low. Also, there is the low acceptance of the changes, which make the lives of these people static and vulnerable, especially the women. Due to far flung areas, fewer facilities available for them for educational attainment and due to limited mobility, most of the women are illiterate. They have less power of decision making. Compared to men, they have lower quality of life. That is the reason they cannot gain access to income generating opportunities. This results in economic disempowerment. Women remain dependent on men. This cause more poverty and low standard of life. (Shah, Aziz & Ahmad, 2015) also mentioned that social norms are also restricting women's mobility. This has resulted in a limited range of employment opportunities and lower wages for women. It also results in low reproductive health. Maternal mortality rates remain high. Low literacy rate is one reason of women's poverty because without a good education. Women cannot gain a better status and high level jobs and they cannot contribute to development and economic growth (Chudhary & Rahman, 2009). Literacy provides a foundation for reduction of poverty and sustainable development. It provides a basis for the respect for human rights, the universalization of basic education, conflict resolution, nutritional sufficiency, and for an overall improved quality of life (UNESCO, 2012).

According to tribal men (10);

"Nowadays, even men are not secure how women can live a secure life, poor law and order situation compelled everybody to stay at home, in such environment, how we can allow our women to go and get educated or live an independent life. If schools and colleges are available in our village then we can think about girls` education, but in other city she cannot survive, our respect, dignity and honor is more preferable than any kind of degrees or jobs, and when men are there to feed them, protect them and to look after them so I don't ink so that women need any job when the husband is doing enough for them "(10 interview).

In Balochistan insecurity is the biggest issue faced by the people. One of the problems mentioned by informants is insecurity that kept the girls out of school due to the long-distance from home to the school. Due to fear of harassment, girls are not allowed to go to school or colleges that are quite far from their houses. Most of the informants did not send their girls to school and expressed their disapproval of girls leaving the house. They had felt that it was better for girls to stay in the security of the house and not to be seen working in a public place. These findings are in line with the results of (Arai & Tabata, 2006).

As a matter of fact, women's role is less appreciated by their families and is also less demanding. Men, as head of the families, find it difficult to accept women's freedom to find work like men. Men generally do not permit their women to compete with them in the field of life. The major reason for this is the feeling of insecurity in society. This prevents women from moving beyond the confines of their household to search for likelihood, even though they feel a strong need for it. One of the principles that organize Pakistani society is gender. Its social value is predetermined in the part of the article culture and local traditions (Khan, Sajid & Rehman 2011).

7. Conclusion

As shown here, the perception of women in the Baloch tribes is constructed in the context of Rawaj (tribal code) and religious interpretation. This is especially true in the tribal areas of Balochistan. In Balochistan, the tribal set up is universally practiced. In such a social environment, tribal men play an influential role in the lives of the people of the tribe they belong. It is observed that they consider their tribal setup to the best socio-cultural system where everybody is accountable for his deeds to other tribal fellows. However, in this tribal setup even men are not fully empowered. Further, women are considered as the pride and honor of the tribe. Men associate the tribe`s honor with the character of their women.

This possessiveness never allowed tribal men to violate the century's old tribal norms of allowing women to be empowered or for obtaining higher education. This study primarily investigates the tribal men`s perception regarding women empowerment and education, in rural areas of Balochistan. Using a qualitative approach, Interview through snow ball chain referral sampling was the means of collecting data. In this research, the obstacles to women's empowerment have been observed to be the perception of men, tribalism, ethnocentric views, and insecurity. Due to these factors, men do not allow or facilitate their women for higher education or empowerment. Women`s role in the prosperity of any nation, cannot be denied. Women`s education and empowerment are prerequisite for the development and advancement of any society. Women`s education and empowerment are not dependent only on their male counterparts. Resources, awareness, unbiased policies, and facilities by higher authorities are also needed.

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Table 5.1 Demographic data of the informants

Respondent	Location	Code Name Edu	Age	Designation
R1	Rural Balochistan	Maser`s	60	Tribal chief (sardar)
R2		Secondary level	47	Co tribal chief (Malik)
R3		Illiterate	49	Assistant tribal chief (Takari)
R4		Illiterate	50	Common tribal man
R5		Illiterate	53	Common tribal man
R6		Secondary level	56	Tribal head
R7		Illiterate	59	Common tribal man
R8		Intermediate	60	Common tribal man
R9		Middle	63	Common tribal man
R10		Illiterate	65	Common tribal man