



TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF EDUCATION: UNRAVELING GENDER ROLES IN PAKISTAN THROUGH A COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This research delves into the intricate dynamics of gender roles and disparities within the context of education systems. It aims to explore the influence of socialization on shaping gender norms and the consequential impacts on educational outcomes, particularly in regions marked by significant gender disparities. The study examines the construction of gender roles within societies, highlighting the role of socialization processes in perpetuating and reinforcing these roles from an early age. It investigates how societal expectations and cultural norms shape individuals' perceptions and behaviors regarding gender. A critical analysis of the existing gender disparities in educational access, enrollment, and attainment is conducted, shedding light on the barriers faced by marginalized genders, particularly girls, in accessing quality education. The research scrutinizes the role of education systems in both perpetuating and challenging traditional gender norms. It examines the presence of gender stereotypes in educational materials, such as textbooks, and explores the potential of education as a tool for breaking gender norms and fostering gender equality. Finally, the study proposes strategies and interventions aimed at leveraging the education system to challenge and dismantle gender stereotypes, promote inclusive learning environments, and advance gender equality within educational settings and beyond.

Keyword: Education, Gender roles, Socialization

Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in shaping societal norms and expectations, particularly in relation to gender roles and expectations. In the context of Pakistan, where traditional gender roles have been deeply entrenched, education can serve as a powerful tool for challenging and transforming these norms. This introduction will explore the influence of education on gender roles and expectations in Pakistan, drawing upon scholarly research and relevant studies. Education has long been recognized as a fundamental pillar for societal development and progress. In the case of gender roles and expectations, education can serve as a catalyst for change by promoting gender equality, challenging gender stereotypes, and empowering individuals to challenge and transcend traditional gender norms (UNESCO, 2019). As education expands access to knowledge and information, it can contribute to transforming societal perceptions of gender roles and expectations.

The context of Pakistan provides an interesting case study in examining the role of education in shaping gender roles and expectations. Pakistan is a country where gender inequality and traditional gender roles have been deeply rooted in social and cultural norms (Hussain, 2018). Traditional expectations assign women to domestic roles and men to breadwinning roles, limiting opportunities for women's empowerment and reinforcing gender disparities (Iqbal & Haider, 2017). However, there is evidence to suggest that education can challenge these norms and contribute to the empowerment of women. Research indicates that educated women in Pakistan are more likely to challenge traditional gender roles and have greater control over their lives (Khan, Raza, & Ahmed, 2020). Education provides women with the necessary skills, knowledge, and confidence to engage in critical thinking, question social norms, and strive for gender equality. Moreover, educational institutions can play a pivotal role in challenging and transforming gender roles and expectations. Schools and colleges can promote gender-sensitive curricula that challenge stereotypes and emphasize gender equality (UNESCO, 2019). By creating an inclusive and supportive environment, educational institutions can empower both girls and boys to question traditional gender norms and envision alternative.

Gender roles

A function is a behavior pattern associated with a certain social position, as described by Linton (Buda, 1985). Hence, role-behavior is a dynamic process that depends on the interplay of individuals with different social views and classifications. The term "gender roles" refers to the stereotypical roles that men as well as women are assumed to play in society (Blackstone, 2003). To paraphrase, "a woman's place is a collection of essentially feminine behavioral qualities and conventions rules and prescribing, which pertain to the conduct and communications of women among men as well as other gender companions" (Buda, 1985).

Men are expected to look after their families financially, while women are expected to care for their children and other family members. Opinions of traditional gender roles in the modern day imply otherwise. They advocate for more equitable interactions among men as well as women and argue that people's actions shouldn't be based just on their gender. Everyone should be free to choose how much or how little they wish to identify with predetermined gender roles. "(Blackstone, 2003)

This then leads us to discuss social constructions, which are the rules of civilization that men and women alike have adopted since they are seen to be socially acceptable. Definition: Social norms are patterns of conduct that are widely accepted as normal or "regular" in a given society. These are generally seen as guidelines or a "detailed list" that if both men and women might use to conform to the social norm (Khan et al., 2015). Among these qualities is the option to present as either a man or a woman. Males and females are not opposite extremes of a spectrum but rather distinct characteristics (Bem, 1981).

It is commonly accepted in western society that males may and should exhibit traditionally masculine features like competition, aggressiveness, and domination, while women must be nurturing, relationally focused, docile, collaborative, and communicative (Stets & Burke, 2000) Male and female identities are not tied to one's biological sex but are instead socially produced. It's conceivable for men to identify as feminine and women to identify as masculine, or for people of both sexes to embrace extreme versions of these

identities. Several men and women in modern American culture have been encouraged to adopt stereotypical gender roles due to these factors. Those who choose not to adhere to such gender expectations are typically stigmatized since they deviate from the norm (Castells, 2004).

More specifically, a feminine guy is a man who fails to project masculine traits, even if they define as a man. On the opposing side, irrespective of how they identify, people will judge a woman who does not exhibit traditionally feminine characteristics as a man female. While modern western culture encompasses a broad range of gender expressions, (Butler, 2004) I will restrict my discussion here to the traditional gender responsibilities of men and women. The role that one's gender identification and presentation may have in shaping norms at home and in the workplace will also be addressed (Eisler, 2017)

A functionalist perspective (Parsons & Bales, 1955) argues that the separation of labor into male and female spheres is both natural and advantageous. Men's primary function is functional (to provide for their families), whereas women's primary function is creative. The gendered division of labor is not unavoidable, especially in today's society where less and fewer occupations are traditionally reserved for males.

Conventional gender roles beliefs are analyzed by Inglehart and Norris (2003) across 70 nations in the mid - twentieth century. Their research shows that cultural views toward women's rights change as civilizations progress economically (from agricultural to industrialize to post-industrial). The conventional family structure is crumbling as a consequence of modernization, while women's rights is on the upswing. In contrast to poorer, rural, industrial countries, those in the reply era are significantly more progressive when it comes to gender equality in the workplace.

The rise of secularism, which weakened the old religious underpinning of the many objective morality connected with the household," and women's role opportunity for higher learning and the workforce are to blame for the shift in conventional gender norms (Scott, 2006). Women's roles change as a result of increased female independence and freedom. Scott's findings from the European Beliefs Studies, though, reveal that even in the present day the vast majority of nations still respect marriages and the home. (Scott, 2006)

Role of Socialization in shaping Gender Roles

Gender role socialization, like general socialization, occurs in a variety of contexts. Initial, or fundamental, socialization occurs in the context of the home, where gender norms about dress, grooming, playthings, and parental expectations begin to take shape. Peer relationships appear to have a greater influence on the development of gender norms than does the family, making them an important component of the socialization process. Children learn about gender roles via imitation, therefore early friendships between people of the same gender are crucial. Reality shows, commercials, newspapers, and movies all have an impact in spreading the dominating role models for both sexes in today's society (Somlai, 1997).

The formal educational system also serves as a secondary setting for socialization. Gender roles are mostly learned via exchanges between teachers and their students, both formally and informally. Stereotypes may be declining in the overt curricula, but they persist in the 'concealed' curriculum² (e.g., differing demands from instructors and school rules that are gender-based) (Szabó, 1988). Feminist academics claim that educators have a more tolerant and prejudiced attitude toward guys. Instructors are more likely to compliment boys and credit their success to their ability. It's also unclear whether males or girls benefit more

from today's mostly female teaching force. Yet, just because the teaching and learning has become more feminized does not entail that the grading system of higher education institutions favors females and is the explanation for their greater school performance. Scientists have proposed that, because of the distinct learning techniques of boys as well as girls, distinct school curriculum must be elucidated as pertaining gender, and therefore that, sometimes in learning settings, separate and unequal teaching would've been attractive. (We consider this is a complicated topic; for plausible causes for the good performance of girls in secondary schools (Fényes, 2010). According to PISA testing results in Austria and in the Developed nations (Fényes, 2010, the advocates of separation point out that girls' neurobiological advancement is quicker than that of men' at eras 6 and 7 (even though by the decade mark, teenagers strive to have recompensed for all of this), and therefore that girls have good language skills, whilst the men have good arithmetical and technical expertise. Scientists working in the field of education have indeed pointed to the importance of textbooks in conveying examples of positive behavior. Independent-thinking guys are often shown in these works, whereas submissive girls are typically depicted (Kereszty, 2005).

The influence of universities on gender roles is likely to be less significant than that of peers and families. An American research found that the atmosphere in primary schools had a little influence on young girls' views on gender roles (Adler et al., 1992). Family and cultural factors, more than education levels, predict views on gender roles. (Vella, 1994)

The impact of universities on men's as well as women's sense of self-worth and value judgments was studied by Astin and Kent (1983). Because gender roles are so intrinsically linked to a person's sense of self, studies like these are crucial. One of the things they want to look into is the whether or not going to college causes people of different sexes to become more alike, or if indeed, as Astin (1977) shown, it really makes people more alike. According to Astin and Kent's findings, first-year women in 1970 rated themselves higher and possessed greater traditionally masculine attitudes than in prior decades. Among males, the importance placed on starting and maintaining a family was somewhat greater in 1980 than it had been in 1971, but it was lower among men possessing humanities and cultural degrees.

Learners in advanced education's' views on gender roles may be influenced by the reality that, in industrialized countries, female students make up a larger proportion of the student population at both the secondary and university levels. School performance is another area where guys fall beyond girls. Fényes (2010b) found that girls fared better in Hungarian higher education institutions, and yet boys fared much better in university education based on certain metrics of effectiveness (publishing action during in the research findings, special university student social standing, PhD initiatives), which might also indicate a more advantageous position for them in the labor market.

Gender Disparity in Education

Gender disparity in education refers to the unequal access and opportunities for education based on gender, particularly the disadvantage faced by girls and women. In the context of Pakistan, gender disparity in education has been a persistent issue, with significant gaps between male and female enrollment rates, literacy rates, and educational attainment. According to a report by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Pakistan has one of the world's largest gender disparities in primary education. The net enrollment rate for boys in primary education is higher than that of girls, with girls comprising only 62% of the enrolled students

(UNESCO, 2018). This disparity becomes more pronounced at higher levels of education, with a decline in the number of girls progressing to secondary and tertiary education.

Various factors contribute to this gender disparity. Socio-cultural norms and traditional gender roles in Pakistan often prioritize boys' education over girls'. The expectation that girls will assume domestic responsibilities and get married at an early age can result in parents prioritizing their sons' education. Furthermore, prevailing gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices within communities and schools reinforce these disparities. The education system itself can perpetuate gender disparities. Textbooks often portray gender biases, reinforcing traditional gender roles and stereotypes. Female representation and achievements are often overlooked, contributing to the marginalization of girls in educational settings (Malik & Raza, 2021). Efforts to address gender disparity in education in Pakistan have been made at various levels. The government has implemented policies and initiatives, such as the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality in Education, aimed at promoting girls' education and gender equality in schools. Non-governmental organizations and civil society groups have also been actively involved in advocating for girls' education and challenging gender norms.

According to the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM), the net enrollment rate for boys in primary education is higher than that of girls. In rural areas, only 51% of girls are enrolled in primary schools, compared to 61% of boys (Government of Pakistan, 2018). This disparity becomes even more pronounced at higher levels of education, with fewer girls progressing to secondary and tertiary education.

Several factors contribute to gender disparity in education. Societal norms and traditional gender roles in Pakistan often prioritize boys' education over girls'. Girls are expected to assume domestic responsibilities and get married at an early age, which can lead to parents prioritizing their sons' education (World Bank, 2017).

Gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices within communities and schools also perpetuate the disparity. Girls may face cultural barriers, such as restrictions on their mobility or limited access to safe educational facilities (The Asia Foundation, 2019). Furthermore, girls' education is often undervalued and considered less important than boys' education, leading to limited resources and support for girls' schooling. The education system itself can reinforce gender disparities. Textbooks used in Pakistani schools often depict gender biases and reinforce traditional gender roles and stereotypes. A content analysis study conducted in Pakistan found that textbooks portray women and girls in limited roles, mainly associated with domesticity and motherhood, while men and boys are depicted as active participants in public life and leadership (Siddiqui & Khan, 2019).

Role of education System in shaping gender norms

The role of the education system in shaping gender roles and expectations is crucial in addressing gender disparities and promoting gender equality. The education system plays a significant role in shaping gender roles and expectations in society. It serves as a platform where attitudes, values, and beliefs are transmitted to the younger generation. The curriculum, teaching methods, and school environment all contribute to the socialization process and the formation of gender identities (Connell, 1987).

In the context of Pakistan, the education system can either reinforce traditional gender norms or challenge them. Textbooks used in schools often depict gender biases, portraying

stereotypical roles for men and women and reinforcing existing gender inequalities (Malik & Raza, 2021). This can perpetuate gender disparities and limit the aspirations and opportunities of girls and women. The education system has the potential to challenge gender norms and promote gender equality. It can provide opportunities for critical thinking, awareness-raising, and fostering inclusive values. By incorporating gender-sensitive teaching materials and pedagogical approaches, the education system can help students understand and challenge gender stereotypes and discrimination (Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

Moreover, teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' perceptions of gender roles. They can challenge traditional gender expectations by promoting equal participation and opportunities for both boys and girls. Teacher training programs that address gender biases and provide strategies for inclusive education can have a significant impact on promoting gender equality in the classroom (Mehmood et al., 2020). Efforts to reform the education system in Pakistan have been made to address gender disparities and promote gender equality. Policies and initiatives have been implemented to revise textbooks, promote girls' education, and provide training for teachers on gender-sensitive teaching practices (Government of Pakistan, 2018). However, more comprehensive and sustained efforts are needed to ensure that the education system actively promotes gender equality and challenges discriminatory gender norms.

Gender stereotypes in textbooks

Textbooks are powerful educational resources that shape students' understanding of the world. However, they often reflect and reinforce existing gender biases and stereotypes. Gender stereotypes in textbooks refer to the portrayal of stereotypical roles, behaviors, and expectations for males and females, perpetuating gender inequality and limiting individual potential (Keddie, 2008).

In the context of Pakistan, research has highlighted the prevalence of gender stereotypes in textbooks. A content analysis study conducted in Pakistan found that textbooks often depict women and girls in limited roles, such as caretakers, mothers, and homemakers, while men and boys are portrayed as active participants in public life, leadership, and professional careers (Malik & Raza, 2021). Such portrayals reinforce traditional gender roles and reinforce societal expectations that limit girls' aspirations and opportunities. These gender stereotypes in textbooks have significant consequences. They contribute to the perpetuation of gender disparities and unequal power relations between men and women. Girls may internalize these stereotypes, leading to limited self-perception and career aspirations (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Boys, on the other hand, may develop a sense of entitlement and reinforce patriarchal norms and behaviors.

Moreover, the reinforcement of gender stereotypes in textbooks hinders the achievement of gender equality and social progress. It creates barriers for girls and women to access opportunities in various fields, including education, employment, and leadership positions. Additionally, it reinforces societal norms that contribute to gender-based discrimination and violence (United Nations, 2020). Addressing gender stereotypes in textbooks is crucial for promoting gender equality and challenging discriminatory practices. It requires the development and implementation of gender-sensitive and inclusive curriculum guidelines. Textbook authors, educational policymakers, and curriculum developers should work together to ensure that textbooks portray diverse gender roles and provide positive and realistic representations of both men and women (UNESCO, 2019).

Breaking gender Norms through education

Gender norms are societal expectations and beliefs about how individuals should behave based on their assigned gender. These norms often reinforce traditional roles and stereotypes, limiting opportunities and perpetuating gender inequalities. Breaking gender norms involves challenging these preconceived notions and promoting greater freedom and agency for individuals to express themselves and pursue their aspirations regardless of gender (UN Women, 2020).

In the context of Pakistan, traditional gender norms heavily influence social and cultural dynamics. These norms dictate distinct roles and responsibilities for men and women, often relegating women to domestic spheres and limiting their participation in public life and decision-making processes (Shahid, 2019). Breaking gender norms is essential to address gender disparities and create a more inclusive society.

Various strategies can be employed to break gender norms. Education plays a pivotal role in challenging stereotypes and promoting critical thinking. By incorporating gender-sensitive curriculum and teaching practices, education can help challenge traditional gender roles and empower individuals to question and reject discriminatory norms (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Engaging men and boys in conversations about gender equality is another vital approach. Programs that promote positive masculinity and challenge harmful stereotypes can contribute to breaking gender norms and fostering more equitable relationships between genders (Promundo, n.d.). Media and popular culture also play a significant role in shaping societal perceptions of gender. By promoting diverse and non-stereotypical representations of gender in media content, such as TV shows, films, and advertisements, stereotypes can be challenged and more inclusive narratives can be created (United Nations, 2017). Legislative and policy measures are crucial for breaking gender norms and promoting equality. Laws that address discrimination, promote gender-balanced representation, and provide legal protection against gender-based violence help create an environment where gender norms can be challenged and dismantled (United Nations, 2019).

Community and grassroots initiatives are also vital for breaking gender norms. Non-governmental organizations, civil society groups, and community leaders can organize awareness campaigns, workshops, and advocacy efforts to challenge gender norms, promote gender equality, and empower individuals to resist societal pressures (UN Women, 2020). In conclusion, breaking gender norms is essential for achieving gender equality and creating more inclusive societies. Through education, engaging men and boys, promoting diverse media representations, implementing supportive policies, and community initiatives, it is possible to challenge and overcome harmful stereotypes and norms. By breaking gender norms, we can create a world where individuals are free to express themselves, pursue their aspirations, and live without the limitations imposed by gender-based expectations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this comprehensive literature review underscores the pivotal role of education in shaping gender roles within the context of Pakistan. Through an in-depth analysis of existing research, it becomes evident that education serves as a powerful tool for both perpetuating and challenging traditional gender norms. While socialization processes heavily influence the construction of gender roles, the education system plays a crucial role in either reinforcing or disrupting these norms. By examining the presence of gender stereotypes in educational materials and exploring avenues for breaking these norms through education, this review highlights the transformative potential of educational interventions. Moving forward, it is imperative for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to prioritize efforts aimed at

fostering inclusive learning environments, promoting gender equality, and empowering individuals to challenge and reshape prevailing gender roles in Pakistani society

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