



RESEARCH PAPER

A Phenomenological Study of Feminist Activism: Point of Views of Working Ladies in Sialkot, Pakistan

¹Farwa Hadayat Ullah ²Mehwish Khalid* and ³Saba Javed

1. M. Phil Scholar, Department of Sociology, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Government College Women University Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Government College Women University Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan

*Corresponding Author: mehwish.khalid@gcwus.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

Feminism has assumed an indispensable part in the transformation of current cultures. Feminist international development has changed customary man centric attitudes and helped the women to convey for their social and political space in a male-overwhelmed biosphere. This research explores a widespread worth of feminist beliefs and their appearance inside a semi-religious Islamic republic, Pakistan. This research was subjective in nature in which hypothetical testing procedure were followed, where 10 ladies were recruited as research participants from Sialkot and experts from Lahore through purposive sampling technique. A Connell's theory of masculinity was utilized for methodological and analytical understandings. The findings of the study portrayed ongoing trend amongst women to surrender their rights to be the part of society in favor of patriarchal culture in Pakistan society. Amongst the socio-cultural determinants, patriarchal set-up, lack of awareness about women rights, less policy implementations are high up the orders.

KEYWORDS Aurat March, Feminism, Masculinity, Pakistan, Religion, Women

Introduction

The idea of hegemonic masculinity enlighten us the existence of plural masculinities and how it does support the domineering among men and women, just as among men themselves. Hegemonic masculinity breeds the whole population and becomes the cause of violence against women, reinforces the patriarchal norms and encourages the gender parities in the private and public sphere. It was feminism and women's studies effort that had brought gender into literature and public dissertation, which required change in the existing unequal power balance and socio-cultural structure of society. There were different movements emerged for the equality among gender all over the world. The socio-cultural setting of Pakistani society is also mainly patriarchal. The Women's Liberation Movement in the Pakistan had fought for the Women's right to train for new skills and attain participation in all occupation, pointed out unpaid work of women at home and required equal wages for equal work outside the home. Feminist face criticism from some Professional bodies, Unions of skilled male, and had to challenge popular attitudes and stereotypes for women. This research aimed to explore a sociological structure to comprehend the reactions of men towards crisis, changes and challenges in the social organization of gender. By exploring not only what certain groups of female say about gender, this research also explored the various social movements related to women challenging masculinity.

Literature Review

Smuts (1992) shows that the women fortitude among primates diminishes the pervasiveness of hostility by men against women. In this way, a wide variety of woman's activist scholar questions all meanings of manliness that guarantee the normal prevalence of men over women and other species". Simone de Beauvoir had written that "the very first time when we saw a woman who writes to defend her sex" was Christine de Pizan who had wrote *Epitre au Dieu d'Amour* "Epistle to the God of love" in the 15th century (Jardine, 1979). Hienrich Cornelius Agrippa and Modesta di Pozzo di Forzi had worked in the 16th century (Okide, 2021). Marie Le Jars de Gournay, Anne Bradstreet and Francois Poullain de la Barre had wrote in the 17th century (Fernandes, 2017)

Feminism

Cavendish (1985) suggested that women rich enough not to rely upon men financially "were frantic to live with men" who make these female sex their slaves". Mumtaz and Salway (2007), discussed femininity in Pakistan argued that at the large scale there is discriminations sharing resources in their male centric culture which encourages class and sexual orientated hierarchies. At the small level women lives are affected due to arranged marriages within their family or contiguous clans. Ladies are financially depended to men and their primary role is to be a homemakers. In this giving birth of sons who carry, forward male heredity is essential for the security of the woman in her husband's home.

Masculinities

Nilson, (2020) in his research on "The Me-too movement: Men and Masculinity in Swedish News Media" argued that media coverage of me too movement duplicates various masculinities. The toxic masculinities through media driving an absence of sympathy to all others men and utilize their force on ladies that cause ladies to rise their voice for abusing. Society needs a new masculinity that are empathic gentle and accept others perspectives which will create a social change.

Feminist Activism in Pakistan

The feminist movement and women's right awareness in Pakistan was the outcome of the National and international Power reshaping including colonialism, democracy, nationalism, the Global War of terror and Dictatorship. (Saigol, 2016). The idea of "Aurat March" came into the action for the very first time when a huge amount of women protested to end the sexual harassment and violence in the major cities of Karachi, Islamabad, and Lahore on the international women's day 2018. This small protest includes transgender as well to protect women rights initiated to raise the awareness among masses and to change the mindsets and behaviors of people. (Asher, 2020).

State of women in Pakistan

Bhattacharya, S. (2014) discussed "States of women in Pakistan" that the nature of productivity of the women in the labor market is mainly determined by socio-cultural, economic factors. Women face discrimination at workplace. She faces gender bias in the labor market, and lack of supportive facilities such as child care allowances. She considered being inferior at workplace. As a result of discrimination in a workplace, their work is very Low paid, low status, casual and lacks potential upward mobility.

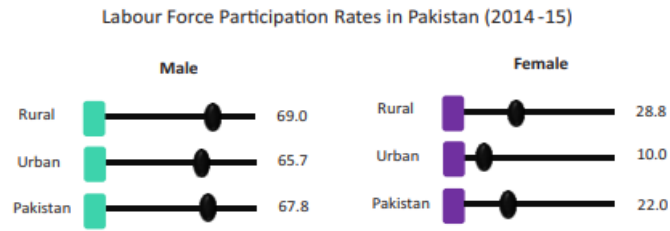


Figure 1.1, Source: PCSW, Gender Parity Report 2018.

As indicated by Labor Force Participation Rate 22% in Pakistan is a lot of lower than the objective of 45%, furthermore much lower than the male LFPR 67.8%. Given below figure portrays that ladies' support in workforce in Rural regions 28.8% Fundamentally exceeds their cooperation in urban regions 10% with hole in male and female LFPR in provincial regions 40.2% well underneath the hole in metropolitan regions 55.7%.

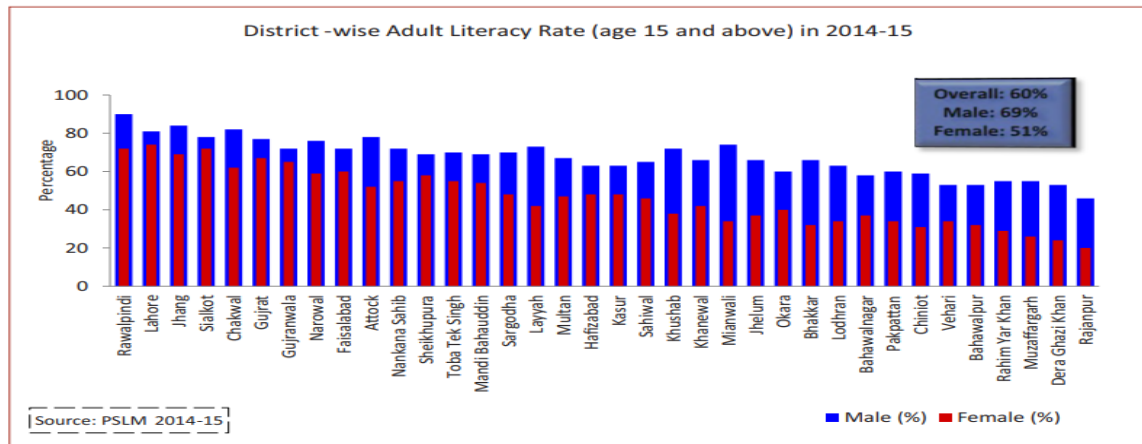


Figure 2, Source: PCSW Gender Parity Report 2018

Rawalpindi had the most high education levels 81% with boy's proficiency at 90% and female education at 72% in Lahore with by and large education of 77.5%. In Lahore, boy's education levels remained at 81% and Girl's proficiency was 74%. Indeed, even in these moderately more 'proficient' areas, the hole among male and female education was obvious and remained at 18%, 7% separately.

This study explored how this feminist activism change this social construction of domination of one gender to other may challenge the hegemonic masculinity of a man if this rising feminist activism effecting the masculine norms of the society and what are the trends coming after rising feminist activism in the society either that trends challenge the hegemonic masculinity or may give more opportunities for female to avail.

Material and Methods

This research explored the lived experiences of working women that how much their lives has been changed after feminist activism and explored how much men at their sphere changed their behavior towards women.

The philosophical stance of this research follows the interpretive school of thoughts. An interpretive qualitative study used in which an interpreting approach were used to conduct an exploratory research on how feminist activism give impact on

masculinity of man, this research followed the interpretive school of thought, a qualitative study to obtain the objectives of this research. Qualitative research normally focused to provide an insight or discovery of those being studied and this interpretive study promised to provide a new perspective to see the world. Thus, this research stressed upon the phenomenological interpretations of its participants through their lived experiences after feminist activism. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews through development of interview guide with following all research rules. This research follows non-probability sampling technique in which purposive sampling were used. The population of this research had two stratum Lahore and Sialkot. There were 10 sample size of present, 2 as an experts of feminist activism from inner Lahore and 8 as a married working woman from Sialkot. All ethical rules of research data security, informed consent and psychological well-being of recruited participants had been followed. The 10 as a sample size had been selected but depends upon the situation during data collection wherever the saturation point will be occurred, the data collection will be stopped.

Data Collection and Analysis

This research explored the lived experiences of working women that how much their lives has been changed after feminist activism and explored how much the men at their sphere changed their behavior towards women. The philosophical stance of this research follows the interpretive school of thoughts. An interpretive qualitative study used in which an interpreting approach was used to conduct an exploratory research on how feminist activism gives impact on masculinity of man. This research stressed upon the phenomenological interpretations of its participants through their lived experiences after feminist activism. The researchers conducted in-depth interviews through development of interview guide with following all research rules. The initial part of interview guide consist demographics of participants, the second part consist of key questions related to the topic, and the third part consist of recommendations to detach the respondents. The interview covered range of determinants followed a semi-structured format based on an interview topic guide developed on the basis of a review of the relevant literature. It covered a range of themes, including (a) feminist activism, (b) feminist activism in Pakistan, (c) masculine behavior after Aurat march, (d) Feminine mobility after feminism (e) Feminine at workplace, and (f) feminine decision making power after feminist activism. To check the effectiveness of the tool the researchers took the pilot test on small sample where the inappropriate questions were altered to more effective questions to have more effective tool. During taking interviews and throughout data analysis, the researchers paid particular attention to critically reflecting their own role to reduce social desirability effects. This research follows non-probability sampling technique in which purposive sampling was used. The population of this research had two stratum Lahore and Sialkot. There were 10 sample size of present, 2 as an experts of feminist activism from inner Lahore and 8 as a married working woman from Sialkot. All ethical rules of research data security, informed consent and psychological well-being of recruited participants had been followed. The 10 as a sample size had been selected but depends upon the situation during data collection wherever the saturation point will be occurred, the data collection will be stopped

Results and Discussion

This study recruited 8 working ladies and 2 experts whose age was between 30-58 years. Eight participants were from Sialkot and two were from Lahore. All were married and earning a good income. The following table shows demographics characteristics of present study participants:

Table 1
Demographical Information of the Participants (Working Women) of This Study

Sr. No	Participants Name	Age	Marital Status	Gender	Job Description	Area
1	Participant A	48 years	Married	Female	Assistant Professor	City housing, Sialkot
2	Participant B	31 years	Married	Female	Professor	Ghoenki, Sialkot
3	Participant C	35 years	Married	Female	Lecturer	Daska, Sialkot
4	Participant D	39 years	Married	Female	Lecturer	Lahore, Punjab
5	Participant E	33 years	Married	Female	Lecturer	Adaa Daska, Sialkot
6	Participant F	33 years	Married	Female	Assistant professor	Okara
7	Participant G	31 years	Married	Female	lecturer	Sialkot
8	Participant H	30 years	Married	Female	lecturer	Sambrial, Sialkot

Table 2
Demographical Information of the Participants (Experts) of This Study

Sr. No	Participants Name	Age	Marital Status	Gender	Job Description	Area
1	Dr.Mumtaz Mughal	50+ years	Married	Female	Director Programs Aurat Foundation, Islamabad District, Punjab, Pakistan	Lahore
2	Ms.Bushra Khalil	53 years	Married	Female	Executive Director at Women in Struggle for Empowerment (WISE) Lahore District, Punjab, Pakistan	Lahore

The five major themes in present study included feminist activism, feminist activism in Pakistan, masculine behavior after Aurat march, Feminine mobility after feminism, Feminine at workplace, and feminine decision making power after feminist activism. All themes were inter-related and categorization is made for better understanding.

Feminist Activism in Pakistan

Women's activism in Pakistan alludes to the arrangement of movements which intend to characterize, build up, and protect the privileges of ladies in Pakistan. This may include the quest for equivalent political, financial, and social rights, close by equivalent freedom. Feminist movement in Pakistan has been started in march 2018, as Aurat march where women comes from their home for their rights not only in public but in private sphere this movement became very controversial for its slogans "Apna khana khud garam kro", meaning in English (Warm your own food), "o beth gai main theek sy" meaning in English (See I am properly sit now), "Mera jism meri marzi" etc. (My body, my will). The Participant B quoted;

"The slogans of Aurat March is embarrassing for women of same society, the issues they demand does not belong to the class they belong too".

The **Expert A** quoted ;"Because of this Aurat march, we as women has a lot of laws honor killing law, property right law almost 15-20 laws for women. Because of this activism women started to be as same as men are, like "I will sit as you are, I will do a job as you are".

Feminist Activism and Masculine Behavior

Masculinity is a set of traits, practices, and roles associated with men and boys include, leadership, domination, independence, strong courage and more powerful as

compared to woman. One of main aim of this study was to explore how masculinity of man had been influenced after feminist activism. The participant F quoted;

“Our social structure has been change, our education guide people about basic individual rights but only 1-2% people has been changed, but if man wants to change, their senior members in family called them “chodo, Ran mureed” that upsets them and they remain same as their antecedent male family members were with their women, she has to do all of her husband task even to give him glass of water”.

The Expert A quoted, “The masculine behavior is as same as it was but this is achievement that now our voices goes to every home and the man of that homes start discussing on this activism”.

Feminist Activism and Feminine Mobility

Feminine Mobility is defined as mobility is characterized as the capability of ladies for development and the actual capacity to get start with one spot then onto the next utilizing at least one methods of transport to address day by day issues. (Adey, 2017). The **Participant C** quoted,

“I am allowed to go wherever I want to but my in laws involve in my personal matters a lot, they tried to inspect about where I was, with whom I was and this is just because of my husband’s inappropriate socialization so he is unable to protect me”. The **Expert B** quoted, “We belongs to a generation who are more developed who give rights to women who allow women to ask for her rights women are allowed to move without purdah, we just give direction to women this is women who do efforts to empower herself”.

Feminist Activism and Feminine in Workplace

Workplace needs to have equity among genders without any discrimination, equal opportunities for promotion, equal job opportunities, equal decision making power and no harassment for both genders. Policies must be followed for employees in any workplace. The Participant B quoted; “ Male are getting more opportunities at workplace either it is promotion, equal job opportunities or decision making power, men get more opportunities because they are considered to be more intelligent and intellectual than women”. The **Expert B**, for harassment at workplace she said:

“Harassment with women is still exit in our society”. For “**Protection against Harassment of women at the workplace act 2010**” she argued;

“This law is basically for civil society where harassment cases are growing fast, this law secure women from having any sort of harassment as an employee, I my self is very on this law, this is duty of compliance to secure women, to control the behavior of a man. Campaign is running for this law and open statement is there for women”.

Decision Making in Household and Masculine Behavior

Women’s decision making authority is clearly linked to the context in which they are living. As in urban communities, women do have more in decision making power. Women’s higher role in household decision making had its own effect relevant to attaining gender equality and fertility reduction outcomes in Pakistan, if a women is consider to take decision, even then decision may be interspace decision in spite of intra

space decisions. Most of the cases women even do not allowed choosing their own life partner it considered as a disgrace for man in their families. The **Participant D** quoted,

“In every decision either that is intra space decision or inter, either to buy a property or mobile or car to have a food in a restaurants a place to enjoy vacations everything, he always discuss with me and get my suggestion even my suggestion get more preference then before”.

The **Participant G** quoted,

“Our elders decide our life partners but I do not know why because they check the qualities in a man according the criteria they made through their life experiences but now they should require according to our societal demands”.

The **Expert A** quoted, she said: “Partners should consider each other equal and give privileged to each because these two people are the two tyres of a vehicle without anyone a vehicle can't work. As for as forceful marriage is concern, Islam itself allows its followers to marry o whom they want”. **On Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Act, 2011 implementing to secure women from forced marriages.** The **Expert B** quoted, “This law forbids numerous domineering and discriminatory norms practiced towards women in Pakistan which are not only against the dignity of women, but also a violation of human rights and are contrary to Islamic Commands, to stop wata sata system, a very worth law in which forced marriage cause jail and fine to who attempted”.

Discussion

The Connell's theory of Masculinity was utilized to explore this study findings. Raewyn Connell's concept of domineering manliness (Connell, 1987) fills in as a logical instrument to recognize those points of view and practices among men that propagate gender discrimination, including the two men's power over women and the power of specific men over other (as often as possible minority groups of) men. Hegemonic masculinity is characterized as the current setup of training that legitimizes predominated situation of man in the general public eye and legitimized the subordination of women and other minimal methods to take care of business (Connell, 2005). Connell's hypothesis of Masculinities additionally perceives masculinity as a socially constructed phenomena. The findings of this study explained the outcomes had showed that there was a divergence in perspectives towards sexual orientation personality, woman's rights, and strict norms and there was an interconnection with nationalism in Pakistan. All women in the two classes discussed their encounters and individual inclusion in the work do in regards to discriminations, gendered mentalities and women's liberation and were actually dedicated for activism seeking after their belief system (traditionalist just as liberal plans). The findings of this investigation are additionally reliable with those of Nagel (1998) and Ramaswamy (2001). Liberal participants in this study have acknowledged and advanced equivalent rights for both male and females worked for its application. Some of the participants were feminist who were battling for the mistreatment that women regularly face and are attempting to give a voice to the other women who have been quieted. They saw and experienced misogyny in Pakistani society as the first motivation behind why females are viewed as inferior compared to men. They accepted that female begin disparaging and ridiculing other females, who perform stereotypically practices and go beyond the norms, internalize misgony. Hence, men as well as women scolded different ladies who step out in the public space either to accomplish something professionally or to achieve a positive change. Misogyny and the idea of authoritarian attitude joined prompts limiting ladies

to their homes and are not permitted to partake in people in general and political spaces. These discoveries reverberate with Jayawardena and de Alwis (1996) who contended that women are utilized through stereotypical gender norms. Most women from conventional society expressed that Islam is a definitive source of guidance as it gives equal deserving roles to all kinds of people. They upheld and supported the idea that people ought to have severe gender roles instead of allowing them to choose roles for themselves. This fits with the theoretical structure offered by Enloe (1990). Eventually, rights must be appreciated if and when they have become a necessary piece of individuals' way of life" (Shaheed, 2010). Consequently, a male-ruled society where men plan and clarify media plans, rules and systems remembering the portrayal of ladies for Pakistan (Huda and Ali, 2015), the battle for women' development stays a long and troublesome one until the traditional press chooses to jump high with them.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

The primary purpose is to find the influence of feminist activism on masculinity of man, how they behaved towards women after feminist activism. The data analysis revealed the manners by which liberal and moderate female Pakistani activists see and experience of Gender Roles, women's liberation, culture and Religious norms in Pakistan. Numerous liberal feminine activists and artists communicated deviant while they took a position against religious and misogynist in Pakistani culture. The outcomes uncovered that women whose work resisted conservative norms promoted the rights of women and needed to consider ladies to be equivalent and empowered people. They needed to claim a public space where they can, with no restriction, pursue and be what so ever they desire to be. All in all, these discoveries have solid implications for the Gender Equality debate in Pakistan. The feminism in Pakistan is as yet proceeded with the pioneer Islamic women's activists (Haya March) contending that Islam gives ladies poise and guarantees their confidence more than any religion, reasoning or even secularism and the common women's activists then again contending that ladies ought to be given equivalent rights independent of their strict or social characters. Aurat March turns into a development that takes this discussion further to the combination of Islamic and mainstream women's liberation as it is upheld by a couple of Islamic women's activists. Thinking about the example of Aurat March, feminist activism dependent on the response and reaction by the political and religious groups propose that under such conditions expecting equivalent rights and equity is almost outlandish yet reachable. For being the Islamic Republic of Pakistan such common expression and demands should be allowed and the political organizations should accept such attitude on the public foundations, nation's law and social relations. This is just possible if the advance norms are accepted by the country with no uncertainty and vacillation. This is appropriate and acceptable for the ladies, the common laborers, minorities and women's activists of Pakistan. But Feminist activism's major focuses is on elite class but rural women black women concerns are not considered their concerns should be considered they are facing still same challenges the feminist activism addressed. Feminist Activism should demand equality according to need, not equality in terms of number, feminist activism should demand equality in terms of respect acknowledgement, as they do double role, they should work on equality in terms of appreciation as they do their duties 24 hours to run the whole family's task, all that task. Lack of Implementation of Women Friendly Law is another help for the Empowerment of Women. Thus, Government should do efforts for strengthening the implementation of Women Friendly Laws and should also ensure social acceptance of these Laws.

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