

Chapter 12

Re-Contextualization of Ethical Values of Pashtun Tribe by the Educated Female Folk in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

It is believed that the economic participation of women in Pakistan has been intensively affected by an enduring male-capitalist social system. Moreover, the history of gender discrimination has been linked with the medieval cultural values that uplifted and empowered men over women in every sphere of life, especially in the economic realm. A typical case is believed to be the Pashtun culture. This chapter investigated indigenous values of Pashtun culture where women are underrepresented in the economy. Women did not see themselves as underprivileged. Rather, they perceived themselves as a vital and prestigious part of the family and the wider Pashtun society. For educated women in Pashtun society, the values system is guided by social structure, which is accounted for by stability and unity in society. Cultural values are operationalized as the mechanism of division of labor. The findings redefine female empowerment and propose a new paradigm in the global context. The indigenous value system guides the social structure which leads to stability and unity in the society.

INTRODUCTION

Many countries have changed their societal structure relating to the empowerment of women, but others have been practicing the old patterns of life where the male has the power to decide, work, and rule. These principles, which command the whole activities of man, family, and community, are the part of the culture which are being passed from generation to generation. The basic concern of this research is

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that gender roles are framed by culture in all societies. Social phenomenon varies across societies: in one country women's economic participation is low but in others, it is at the peak. The policies and actions against sex, on international and national levels, are unequal across the globe. The economic participation of women in Pakistan has been intensively affected by the enduring male-capitalist social system, instead of a "women equal population" with men. The data from the Labor Force Survey of Pakistan, World Bank, and the International Labor Organization claims that women's economic participation in Pakistan is below par, as compared to the international standard in developed countries. Economic participation empowers women in other areas like education, politics, and decision making. Moreover, the history of gender discrimination has been linked with the medieval cultural values that uplifted and empowered men over women in every sphere of life, especially in the economic realm. Such cultural values have intensely covered the life patterns regarding women presence in the market of Pashtun society.

It does not matter how many changes and complications have happened in the history of human life - culture still retains the fundamental source of life guidance in pre-modern, modern, and post-modern eras. The essence of development is peace, prosperity, equality, humanity, altruism, and happiness. These are the needs of every society irrespective to religion, race, caste, socio-economic class, color, and region. It can be attained by the contribution of legal, political, and economic systems. In developing regions of the world, culture has more legitimacy in people's lives than the systems mentioned above. The reason is that culture has deep and long-standing roots that provided very little chance to be altered by the revelation of other systems.

The knowledge, skills, and potential of most women are limited to unpaid works that stagnate their subordinate position. The reason is that women have little share in the property and have the unequal right of ownership. For example, the field of agriculture is comprised of 43% women, yet they own three times less land than men and no power to decide (FAO, 2011). It became a cultural value that women's working capability is lesser than men's, and such trends are being explored in Pashtun society (to what extent women are repressed by cultural values). Obviously, Pashtun - whether in Afghanistan or in Pakistan - are rarely influenced by acculturation because few people of other cultures have also adopted the manners of Pashtun culture and settled there. The primitivism of values is constant toward gender and very different from the actual essentials of development.

In the case of Pashtun culture, many (even whole) matters of life are passed from via cultural sieve. The understanding of Pashtun cultural values is essential for the implementation of prosperous-ended policies. In fact, the reformation of any principle or rule is the course of prosperity and variety of life, but the nullification at the grassroots level of some valid and prevalent values are leading to simplicity and ambiguity. The United Nations have an organized institution, UNESCO, to protect cultures and its diversities. In this regard, it is important to explore the values of the Pashtun culture that apparently promote the gender gap but in reality, these might maintain prosperity, peace, and gender equality.

BACKGROUND

Women in the workforce is not a recent phenomenon – it is as old as human history. The hunting and gathering societies were appropriate for both sexes. Similarly, agrarian society is still allowing women in the workforce at a very great ratio. In that field, women are being exploited as workers and they have no right to be owners of the property. Gradually, the phenomenon of exploitation became harsh in an industrialized society where they are deprived of economic participation. The achievement of gender

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