

## Understanding of Perceived Gender Discrimination Phenomenon among Women in the Pakistani Context

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### Abstract

*The present research was planned for qualitative exploration of perceived gender discrimination in the Pakistani context on the lines of relative deprivation theoretical background. Five focus group discussions (N = 35) with working, non-working, married, and single adult women and two in-depth interviews with gender rights social activist and female lawyer were conducted. Their age range was 22-40 years with a mean age of 28.56 years. Content analysis technique revealed eight distinct domains as the main categories of discrimination perceived by women on the basis of gender, namely, education, employment/career, familial matters, financial matters, general social rights, appreciation and encouragement, abuse and violence, and gender-based stereotyping. Participants reported that despite offering more sacrifices and compromises, as compared to men the subsequent appreciation and encouragement given to them is non-existent. This contributed to one of the important and unique themes of perceived discrimination.*

**Keywords:** Gender Discrimination, Pakistani Women, Perception of Inequality, Relative Deprivation.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The population of Pakistan shows a bigger ratio by numbers for women than men, but by facilitation, this numerical figure carries no significant meaning, as abundant and recent research work quotes the current status of women as deprived across all segments in Pakistan (Ahmed *et al.*, 2014; Faridi

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**Authors' Note:** *An earlier version of the article was presented at the first national conference on Qualitative Psychology held on 5th March 2020 at NUST. We wish to acknowledge the useful comments received from the participants of the conference as well as the three Anonymous referees of the NJSSH.*

and Rashid, 2014; Fatima, 2014; Galloway, 2014; Haq *et al.*, 2017; Nauman and Abbasi, 2014; Nawaz-ul-Huda and Burke, 2017; Pakeeza, 2015; Rasul, 2014; Tazeen *et al.*, 2011). Customary practices and traditions are navigational compasses for women's lives. For them, various spheres of life such as education, profession, marriage, health, attire, and behaviour are dictated by men in the name of gender role attitudes and women's inferior status in society.

Marginalization of women across Pakistani society is mainly attributed to excluding them from processes of decision-making (Weiss, 2003, 2012). Women trapped in abusive marriages and families face violence and even and they possess no decision-making power about their personal lives. Collectively and individually, the Government of Pakistan and various international and local non-governmental organizations are putting serious efforts to address gender discrimination issues (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan [HRCM], 2015; National Education Management Information System [NEMIS], 2015; United Nations Population Fund [UNPF], 2017). Despite such efforts and considering the patriarchal composition of the Pakistani society, the overall progress is still crippled due to contextual factors. This lack of awareness called for an investigation as to how Pakistani women, especially the ones living in the most facilitated demographic conditions, perceive gender discrimination. To address this question, the present study was designed to qualitatively explore perceived gender discrimination among women as an efficient parameter to understand women's stance on gender inequality across different domains.

Looking back at the theoretical roots of the concept, Davis (1959) was the first to endeavour a formal articulation of the Relative Deprivation theory. At the time, he declared that according to the vital preconditions to encounter relativity of resources-related access, an individual compares him/herself with deprived vs. un-deprived group, and when he is in the deprived group then the subsequent state will be called relative deprivation. In the case of social inequity among women, relative deprivation theory reflects that women's perception of discrimination is based in comparison with men, realizing the components of (a), women want equal education, employment, decision making rights, etc. (b), women's perceived extent and comparison to which men have education, employment, decision making rights, etc., (c) women deserve an equal level of rights and as a result, (d) women have/will have their equal rights.

The Constitution of Pakistan declares equal rights for all citizens both men and women irrespective of their sex, yet the traditional unspoken rules are more powerful than the stated version to oppress women's rights and creating an unequal environment in the country (Government of Pakistan, 2005, 2014; Tabassum, 2016). Solely pointing out legal flaws is not the total picture here,

as another basic problem is women limited awareness about their rights granted to them by Pakistani law. Findings from a survey of the Human Rights Commission (Government of Pakistan, 2002) stated that nearly 90% of the females addressed did not understand that they had rights by any means. It is the interrelatedness of various social and standard practices that influence them unavoidably and put them in a place of subordination and reliance. Men have been given the facilitation and women are deprived even though it is not their fault and the social segmentation is illegitimate. They compare their situation with men, cognitive appraisal ensures that they want and care about equity-based treatment because the prevailing situation is unfair and unjust and as a result, they feel equally deserving and entitled to the facilitation. The comparison, cognitive appraisal, unfair treatment, and lack of equity result in a state called perceived social inequity and perceived gender discrimination (Corning, 2000, 2002; Smith *et al.*, 2012).

Reliance of the present study's model on relative deprivation theory (Davis, 1959), perceived social inequity (Corning, 2002, 2000), and expanding the research on the future directions suggested by their work on perceived gender discrimination, it is significantly important to assess the experiences of the stigmatized group on theoretically and psychometrically supported means at the individual level. Based on this account, perception of gender discrimination among Pakistani women within our own cultural and psychosocial context relative deprivation framework requisites qualitative exploration of the domains of gender discrimination perceived by Pakistani adult women.

## 2. METHOD

The potential to advance understanding of gender discrimination, its adjacent tenants, and its perception; qualitative research as a primary method used in the present study, continues to gain importance in the fields of gender and women studies (Ali *et al.*, 2013; Ali *et al.*, 2012). To explore the phenomenon, two in-depth interviews with subject matter experts (a social activist and a lawyer) and five focus group discussions with adult women from the general population were conducted.

### 2.1. Sample

To get complete knowledge about the perceived gender discrimination phenomenon, information was sought from field specialists and women separately. Adult women's opinions and experiences were sought through focus group discussion. Overall, 5 focus groups discussions were conducted (i.e., three focus group discussions with working women, one with housewives,

and one with adult female students). The existing literature suggests that perceived discrimination has a different interplay when women are working or non-working and/or married or single. Participants in the focus group discussions included 35 women with bachelor/masters' level education. The average number of participants in each focus group discussion was five. Their age range was 22- 40 years with a mean age of 28.56 years. Details are presented in Table 1. After conducting FGDs, to finalize the acquired spread of broad information provided by adult women for an understanding of the phenomenon, experts' point of view was obtained through two qualitative interviews that included a female social activist working on gender issues for more than ten years, and a lawyer pertinent to addressing women's issues. The purpose of the interviews was to have a professional point of view about the perception of gender discrimination among women and their concerns about domains and arenas of discrimination. The social activist belonged to a reputed organization working on gender issues in Islamabad, whereas, the lawyer was from Rawalpindi court, with progressive experience in their fields respectively. They were all contacted individually at their workplaces.

Table 1. Description of Focus Group Participants (N = 35)

FGD no.	NoP	Marital Status		Employments Status			Age Range	Ages	
		MI	SI	WO	Non-WO			M	SD
					S	H			
1	7	4	3	7	-	-	26-40	32.1	4.70
2	7	3	4	7	-	-	25-36	28.5	4.23
3	7	4	3	7	-	-	23-34	28.1	3.53
4	7	6	1	-	-	7	23-39	29.5	5.82
5	7	1	6	-	7	-	22-28	24.4	2.07
Total	35	18	17	21	14		(22-40)	28.5	4.74

Note. FGD = Focus Group Discussion; NoP = Number of Participants; MI = Married; SI = Single; WO = Working; Non-WO = Non-Working; S = Students; H = Housewives

## 2.2. Focus Group Guide

Previous research work on perceived gender discrimination laid the foundation for preparing a focus group guide as an instrument (Ambreen, 2000; Tabassum, 2016). To gain maximum responses from participants, important themes and points were identified and questions were formulated. As per the guidelines of Turner (2010), questions were simple and clearly stated with extreme word caution eliminating any judgemental phrasing or probing. The research query for the present qualitative study was to identify maximum areas in which women perceive gender discrimination.

### **2.3. Procedure**

Permission was sought from women and after having their consent for participation, they were included in focus groups. As an essential ethical consideration and due to sensitivity of the information, special caution was made not to highlight or probe any personal or painful incidents and experiences, and the conversation remained general and social about the topics. They were provided with a complete briefing of the issues and provided with the details to approach a specialist/mental health practitioner in case of any post-session negative affective impact. Moreover, the participants were provided with the guidelines to approach the practitioners in case of any unresolved or suppressed affective/experiential scenarios are still affecting them. This was mentioned before and after each session. Focus group discussions were conducted in a manner to ensure that every participant gets an equal chance to participate and must reflect her mind on the topic being discussed for expanding and diversifying to maximize the scope of information. The average duration of each focus group discussion was between 45 to 60 minutes. Later on, the verbatim of the participants' recorder by the researcher was used to make detailed notes. Important points and cues were studied in detail for further thematic congruency as per the theoretical framework and literature review. Sessions were conducted at different venues based on the participants' convenience and availability. Data were transcribed by unfolding the recorded information through detailed notes of their verbatim. After collecting opinions from women, in-depth interviews with experts were conducted to obtain the final verdict on the topic. Before every session, rapport building was established as a compulsory element to ensure that participants share information, experiences, and knowledge on the subject matter.

## **3. RESULTS**

Content analysis was used for analysing the acquired information through qualitative interviews and focus group discussions. Simultaneous assignment of a single text unit to multiple categories is content analysis's primary function (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Tesch, 1990). Through this analysis, homogeneity is established within categories coding schemes and order, and heterogeneity is sustained across the themes and among categories in general (Lincoln, 1995; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Data transcription is made through verse-by-verse and line-by-line division into meaningful units via the segmentation of information. To achieve thematic outcomes, all questions of the focus group guide were segmented to create maximum coding categories.

Therefore, the recording was assessed several times until maximum scrutiny of data. This was organised into categories by coding the data notes with both uniqueness and cohesiveness. Data on one end was precise to condense information within one category which should be alike, whereas new and novel data was considered for new categorisations to organize it.

### 3.1. Evaluation of Domains

Domains that emerged in data were evaluated by review of coding domains with the help of relevant specialists with expertise in qualitative research and verification of coding categories by committee approach. Overlapping in domains' categorisation was rectified after identification of participants and some information was re-coded into more appropriate categories and domains by recommendations of the participants. A complete analysis is clustered under data-driven domains as written in Table 2 and Figure 1.

Table 2. Categories and Sub-categories of Perceived Gender Discrimination (N = 35)

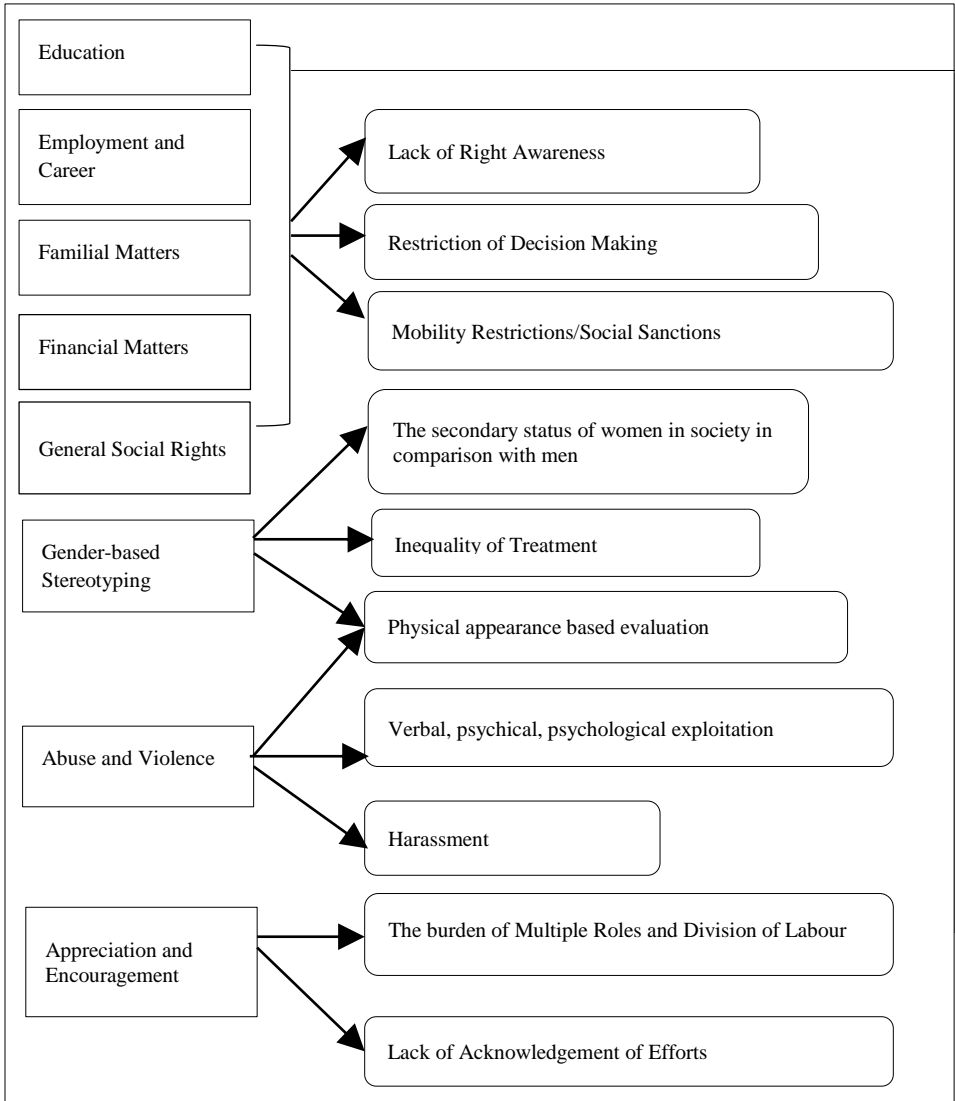
Sr. #	Main Categories (Domains)	Sub-categories (Nature of discriminatory behaviours)
1	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of right awareness (higher education, completing education instead of marrying)</li> <li>▪ Restriction of decision making (co-education, education from male instructor, field of study)</li> <li>▪ Mobility restrictions (studying in other cities or abroad)</li> </ul>
2	Employment and Career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of right awareness (pursuing a career, following career instead of marrying)</li> <li>▪ Restriction of decision making (for work, a field of profession)</li> <li>▪ Mobility restrictions (out-stationed jobs, trainings)</li> <li>▪ Inequality of treatment (burden of roles and responsibilities, overtime, vacations, respect, and admiration)</li> <li>▪ Secondary status (evaluation and assessments on gender not on competence and performance)</li> </ul>
3	Familial Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of right awareness (marriage, dowry, reverence/dower money, divorce, family system, family planning)</li> <li>▪ Restriction of decision making (life-partner selection, time of marriage, family planning, children's education and life choices)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mobility restrictions (to visit parents, relatives or friends or invite them)</li> <li>▪ Inequality of treatment and secondary status (lack of reconsideration for women as wives or sisters or daughters)</li> </ul>
4	Financial Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of right awareness (inheritance, property ownership, trade, business)</li> <li>▪ Restriction of decision making (important financial matters, for purchase and sale of goods and items)</li> <li>▪ Social sanctions to own property</li> </ul>
5	Gender-based Stereotyping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The secondary status of women in comparison with men</li> <li>▪ Inequality of treatment (considering them overly emotional, more accountable, less trustworthy, and less competent/intelligent and less confident)</li> </ul>
6	Abuse and Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Harassment (within families, offices, educational institutes, public places)</li> <li>▪ Verbal, psychical, mental abuse, and violence</li> <li>▪ Physical appearance-based evaluation and exploitation (for marriage proposals)</li> </ul>
7	Appreciation and Encouragement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Acknowledgement of efforts (in education, employment, household chores, childcare)</li> <li>▪ The burden of multiple roles and division of labour (job and domestic responsibilities)</li> </ul>
8	General Social Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of awareness and access (media and information platforms, law-enforcement)</li> <li>▪ Lack of female representations and role models (educational curriculum, media, politics and legislation)</li> </ul>

### 3.2. Education

Women reported that discrimination perceived in education is related to their autonomy and decision making as compared to men. Working women said that despite their liberty to choose and obtain knowledge in the educational field from any institution they want, they still witness discriminatory attitudes at some level within and their family in comparison with males. Students' FGD revealed that in classrooms, girls are perceived as more humanities and social-sciences oriented, poor in quantitative subjects, and sometimes they are evaluated based on sex in the co-education sector. Most importantly, unlike males, they have no rights and they are discouraged to delay marriage for education.

Figure 1. Diagrammatic Representation of Perceived Gender Discrimination Domains and Domain-wise categories among Adult Women (N = 35)



This data-driven approach helped to cluster data into different domains along with relevant behaviours manifested in those domains. Table 2 and Figure 1 summarized the details in the next sections.



### **3.3. Employment and Career**

All of the participants agreed that in our patriarchal society, a career woman is yet one of the unthinkable thoughts. In Pakistan, perusing a career is extremely hard for women as compared to men. Working women said that though many families are now realizing that it is impossible for one person to earn and support the family, however, the pressure on women is yet there. They should opt for the conventional and traditional work professions such as become a teacher or a medical doctor. Working women said that other than family, the workplace environment can also be discriminatory about salary and allowance, fringe benefits, chances of progression, job autonomy, coaching and development possibilities, among other factors. Although it may be different in government and private sectors, discrimination against women is obvious in offices where men are in charge.

### **3.4. Familial Matters**

Women reported that they face discrimination in familial matters such as their right to choose the time of marriage or who they want to marry as compared to men, in their own families and at a societal level as well. Married women reported that they are not involved in decisions regarding the family system, number of children, and the man has supremacy in such matters. All participants were asked regarding their right to divorce and they said it is nearly impossible to think about it, let alone to have this right, even if the law and the religion permit it. Unmarried participants said that it is a family-driven decision and one person's, especially the girl's say is of less importance, as girls are considered immature and unaware of practical life concerns.

Though all the women said that familial issues are usually dealt with and handled by men, the variance of discrimination is different. For example, the housewives said that they are house runners, they have the right to decide what to cook and what to wear but not where to marry or educate their children. Married working women said that they have relative independence in this regard and they sometimes equally decide upon family decisions but because of distributed attention as an employee and wife, they are usually segmented and not asked to share any opinion on matters. Single and studying women said that usually their opinion is sought over trivial matters and decisions. For major decisions such as work, property purchasing or selling, shifting the residence, they are not asked but are rather informed.

### **3.5. Financial Matters**

Areas highlighted by women where they face discrimination also include financial/monetary matters such as spending money/salary/pocket money by personal choice, holding a bank account, purchasing and selling domestic goods/grocery items, making significant financial decisions in the family, purchasing or selling property and seeking/getting an inheritance. Some participants were answerable for their expenses and salary to their significant others. Additionally, their earnings were supposed to be for their family, not for independent expenditure in some working women's cases. The amount of dower was also found to be nominal and very few of the married women have their own expense-money from their husband.

### **3.6. Abuse and Violence**

Women reported that being female makes them most vulnerable because society has criteria for their chastity and virginity determined by their bodies, physical attire, and appearance. Hence, they are easily exploited in all domains. Nearly all women said that being petit and slim is demanded as people evaluate them on the basis of appearance for a marriage proposal, for jobs, and such discrimination is faced by every girl and woman. All of the participants said that public place sexual harassment, innuendos, and judgment based on the physique is most common. Verbal, physical, psychological, and sexual abuse and violence are far more frequent for women as compared to men and usually, men are perpetrators of such brutalities.

### **3.7. Gender-based Stereotyping**

This domain emerged as the novelty of this study, as women reported that they frequently (explicitly and implicitly) experience relatively more discriminatory exposure to stereotypical judgments and attitudes based on their female image primarily because of the female gender as compared to the male gender. Female participants said that they frequently face discriminatory and unequal treatment within domains of education, employment, family setup, or in general settings where they are considered relatively less trustworthy as compared to men. Common social perception holds that women are not competent enough, they are more emotional, timid and feeble as compared to men. They face less acknowledgement and more discouragement regarding their autonomy, independence, and initiative-taking abilities, and if something is appreciated, that is the conventional role of being submissive and obedient subordinate. It is expected of them to compromise, give up, and back off more

often and more quickly as compared to men. In case of any problem (such as having an accident while driving), the blame is directly placed on their gender instead of their capabilities. Single women said that they face considerable discrimination and stereotypical behaviour being single in the society; for example, if they take initiative for themselves to live independently they are considered rebels and in working setup, they are blamed for using their female manoeuvres and whimsicalness to complete the tasks and/or to achieve success.

Another common perception within this domain and generally communicated by participants was that they have secondary status in society. They reported that despite the gradual progress and women main-streaming in our country, still a general perception in this patriarchal society is that men are of supreme order and women are secondary in terms of acquiring any facility or service. Working women of the FGDs highlighted this feature that despite working directly above the subordinate males, they are still considered of secondary status by their male colleagues; further leading to discriminatory attitudes in different settings.

### **3.8. Appreciation and Encouragement**

Another important domain highlighted in FGDs was that women continuously reported that appreciation and encouragement for them are rare in different domains of life as compared to appreciation given to men for similar tasks. Working mothers raised this point that most discrimination face by women nowadays is that they are expected to do full justice to their multiple roles. The participants revealed that they are not appreciated or encouraged for performing well in education and career, having skills and talents, and taking care of family and children. According to them, men get more credit while performing any of the above tasks as compared to women, leading to a perception of deprivation.

### **3.9. General Social Rights**

Other than the above-mentioned domains, a general domain emerged where women reported distinct discriminatory experiences and perceptions from day-to-day life in social settings. They reported experiencing discrimination concerning different social rights as compared to men. These civil or general rights are to cast vote, use technology (personal phone, internet), access to sources of basic rights information, complaint cells, police, media and legislative institutions, and equal and accurate representation on the course and syllabus. This theme was the chief debate in all of FGD sessions and interviews with specialists that women in our society are not aware of their

rights given to them by the constitution and religion and how easily women can access those rights. Considerable misinterpretation has been communicated by radical males such as clerics and scholars in this regard by seeking the false cover of religion.

Another aspect shared by women in this domain was their dissatisfaction with flawed representation or no-representation of women in various walks of life. The most stirring feature was that women portrayed in media are the flawed picture of the true character; either they are completely suppressed or they are super liberal and carefree against the backdrop of Islamic/Pakistani culture. They feel discrimination on seeing women as showpieces for everything. In political and legislative domains, women have to face barriers in reporting their issues and winning their battle against societal men.

Among all the discussed domains and within domain behaviours and patterns of discrimination perceived by women, health was the most neglected factor. Women of all fields said that they neglect their health by procrastinating and delaying the need to visit physicians and by practising self-medication. This is what they have seen their mothers doing and now they are part of that same routine, though they view this behaviour as unhealthy and wrong.

### **3.10. Frequencies of Responses by Focus Group Participants**

After a detailed qualitative view of data, frequencies of responses by women on each domain were calculated to highlight their importance. The description of responses on each domain is mentioned in Table 3.

Table 3 indicated frequencies on each response category by the focus group participants. Before interpreting the frequency table, it is important to see that in the columns of total sum and percentages, and figures reported, respective themes/categories are more than average or 50% (Mean of 35 is nearly 17-18 responses or half of the women responding), indicating that on the whole, our sample perceived more gender discrimination and less gender equality. It was found that abuse and violence, related to harassment and different types of abuse such as physical, sexual, verbal, psychological, was reported by all participants. Gender-based stereotyping, i.e. demeaning women's capabilities and outlook just because of them being female gender, was highlighted as most prevalent among nearly all women. Lastly, more frequencies were reported in general social rights covering the areas of access to rights and awareness regarding social, economic and legislative areas.

Table 3. Frequencies of Responses by Focus Group Participants on Each Domain of Perceived Gender Discrimination (N = 35)

Domains	MW (n = 11)	MNW (n = 7)	SW (n = 10)	SNW (n = 7)	f and % from total sample (N = 35)	
					Total	%
Education	5	7	4	6	22	62.85
Employment and Career	9	7	6	5	27	77.14
Familial Matters	8	7	6	4	25	71.42
Financial Matter	6	7	5	6	24	68.57
Gender-based Stereotyping	10	7	10	7	34	97.14
Abuse and Violence	11	7	10	7	35	100.00
Appreciation and Encouragement	9	6	8	3	26	74.28
General Social Rights	11	6	9	7	33	94.28

Note. MW = Married and Working; MNW = Married and Non-Working (Housewives); SW = Single and Working; SNW = Single & Non-Working (Students).

A close look at the Table suggests, that non-working women whether single or married, perceived more discrimination in employment and career domain than working women; this could be so because of their limited access to opt for occupation or careers. Since the information was obtained from bachelor/masters' level educated women, therefore, adjacent education-related discrimination was relatively less in comparison with other domains.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Gender discrimination, according to the relative deprivation framework, refers to divisions based in the context of gender between two groups (male and female) in any society. Expanding the very definition states that women want the deserving access to their social rights and facilities such as education, career, family and financial rights, general social rights with no threat posed to their gender. They compare themselves with men on a persistent basis because men have more facilities in general. This comparison generates the feeling of being deprived among women (Corning, 2000).

Research work suggests that perceived gender discrimination has two components, 1) the settings, situations, and domains where it prevails and 2) the attitude and emotion-related aspects of discrimination (Ngo *et al.*, 2013; Paulo and Morris, 2006; Sen, 2001). In the present qualitative study, findings emerged in the same manner; first domains were identified and then behavioural or attitudinal practices and manifestations across those domains

were revealed. All these domains are commonly reported in literature explored through different investigation methods (Ali *et al.*, 2013; Andersson *et al.*, 2010; Byrne and Carr, 2005; Gulzar *et al.*, 2012; Syed *et al.*, 2015).

Unique and evidential findings in the present study pertained to two domains, scarcely found in previous literature. One domain was the appreciation and encouragement domain, while the other was exposure to gender-based stereotyping. Appreciation and Encouragement was the frequently surfaced theme during FGDs, especially with working and married women. On the other hand, they are more vulnerable to be stereotyped as emotional, less intelligent, less liable etc. These two domains added an altogether different shade of discrimination purely attributed to relatively perceived by women.

Pakistani women are not only different concerning perceiving discrimination in the above-mentioned two new themes, but they also did not report any particular discrimination faced by them in certain universally acknowledged aspects such as facing discrimination if living as single women, healthcare-related discrimination, the autonomy of the body and its rights related discrimination, and discrimination in leisure and recreational opportunities (Corning, 2000). A possible explanation for not perceiving discrimination in these domains could be that living single is not only prohibited by society but also increases many vulnerabilities and security issues for women as compared to men. It was strangely alarming that in terms of healthcare across the globe, men are prioritized but women in our culture had not reported in this regard majorly because they observed females in their families showing negligence in healthcare even in case of sickness, and such attitude has been internalized by them. According to these women, body rights, sexual, and reproductive health and rights are not part of our Islamic identity as women usually do not indulge in illicit or extra-marital relations or purely sexual behaviours. Lastly, leisure and recreation have been defined by women as visiting relatives or going shopping and that does not hold any specific discrimination in comparison with men for women.

Critical outlook suggested that gender discrimination and its pervasiveness have another aspect as well, which is the probability of over-reporting or exaggeration of feelings and sentiments related to a particular event or a cold ignoring and discarding outlook with under-reporting. Due to this, they are primed with a certain type of emotional associations to particular events/memories from their own past as explored by Gill (2006), this aspect is an embodiment of the term “relative perception” of gender discrimination.

The findings of the present study are insightful in that they cast light upon the realities of an urban, educated or the so-called 'independent women' in our society.

#### **4.1. Limitations and Future Recommendations**

This research study has certain restraints of resources and points towards gaps to be addressed in future. The sample collection focus was on women who are educated and are residents of urban areas; as a result, the illiterate and rural population has remained unnoticed, limiting the research scope and applicability of findings. For future researches, our recommendation is to consider the ethnic and religious backgrounds of the participants and their impact. Using a multi-informant approach can add a unique set of information and also contribute as an endorsing factor because of the possible social desirability and under/over-reporting by the research participants. The qualitative method was chosen to be refined through content analysis technique, but grounded theory or phenomenological exploratory approach will bring more rich information.

### **5. IMPLICATIONS**

An attempt was made through the present research to see this broadly spread phenomenon in the light of psychology along with the integration of sociological and economical perspectives. This research broadens the understanding of domains of gender studies and gender development. An added strength is this study's resulted from reflection and applicability for the native population, assessing the perception of gender discrimination among working, non-working, single and married women. One of the main themes, the need for appreciation and encouragement reflects towards a behavioural and attitudinal element that requires to give more due value to women in her parental as well as in-law's family setups, especially those who are silent in their roles but deserve more acknowledgement in their non-professional roles as wife, mother/mother-in-law, daughter/ daughter-in-law, sister, and this aspect turned out to be the unique contribution of this study. Theory of Relative Deprivation was taken to shed the impression that not only an absolute presence of discrimination and deprivation affects an individual but its sole perception and relativity of its existence is also a potential factor to be studied in this research concerning gender discrimination. More importantly, the theoretical foundation of this assessment may lead a way to assess the concept of perceived relativity

of deprivation and discrimination among women by the development of assessments in the future.

## 6. CONCLUSION

A qualitative exploration of perceived gender discrimination among Pakistani women aimed to explore the inequality perceptions in line with the Relative Deprivation theoretical concept. The analyses revealed some common areas of perceived discrimination such as education, employment/career, familial matters, financial matters, general social rights, abuse and violence, and gender-based stereotyping and a unique aspect, namely, the need to be appreciated and encouraged. An easy path is to simply paint a foreign impression on native conditions but this does not identify the true representation, therefore, the research was conducted to understand and explore gender discrimination along with its possible antecedents and precedents from an indigenous perspective enhancing the knowledge within ground realities of this region.

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