

**Gender Discrimination in Online Learning Environment among
University Students of Islamabad**



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This thesis is submitted to the department of anthropology Quid-i-Azam University Islamabad to bear out the requirement of completing the degree of Masters in Anthropology.

Quid-i-Azam University

Department of Anthropology Islamabad Pakistan

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Formal declaration

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Final Approval of Thesis

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my father Muhammad Sajid.

DRSML QAU

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Yusra Sajid

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Chapter 1

1. Introduction

The word gender signifies the socially constructed identity of males and females. It can be discussed and described as ‘not based on biological dissimilarities between male and female. Gender shows those dissimilarities in a way where they are actual or perceived, appreciated, used, and categorized as men and women. It includes their understanding of the legal system that arises within the complex series of paradoxical social and cultural hopes (Robertson, 2012). Gender differences are remarkably complex, in a society whereby females have been moving without fear into the bazaar and questioning the conventional gender role. Gender roles and ideas generate diverse modes for men and women to practice life, culture, and society. It is therefore essential to acknowledge how quick and significant legal understandings of the notions of ‘equality’ and the law of equality have changed and continue to change gender understanding (Mountfield, 2009). The present research work is to identify the makeup of discrimination in an online educational learning environment.

Pakistan is among those countries which are not famous for visual or digital education. However, the online education and the procedure for the proper conduct of online classes have been scheduled due to a viral disease named Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). The novel coronavirus causes severe lungs infection, and its first cases were reported in Wuhan City, Hubei province, China. WHO reported the first time on December 31, 2019, and January 30, 2020, the WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global health emergency, and later in March (WHO, 2020), the WHO declared the COVID-19 a global pandemic? Scientists trying to find its root causes and have linked it to the wild animal and found the Huanan Seafood Wholesale market in Wuhan, China. It has been considered that the virus has spread across the globe from there (WHO, 2020).

COVID 19 has brought numerous changes throughout the world and still, the risk and fear of the Coronavirus are persistent. It is spreading across the globe with different variants of the virus, observed and faced by the different countries. It has affected various aspects of daily life from

social to economic and from politics to religious places along with educational institutions all over the world. Changes were seen in different forms and the biggest change is shifting the whole working system from physical to online in different fields of human activities. The same change is also faced by educational institutions everywhere in the world and particularly in Pakistan.

Keeping in view the extreme threat of the coronavirus, the government of Pakistan imposed several measures including restrictions on travel, a smart lockdown in various parts of the country, imposed quarantine period for an affected individual, banned flights, closure borders with China, Iran, and Afghanistan. Along with this to restrict the impact of the coronavirus social distancing methods were employed in educational institutions i.e., schools, madrassas, colleges, and universities were closed for an unlimited time. After the closure of educational institutions, the educational system was transferred from physical to online. It meant that classes and research activities were made part of the virtual space and should be approached from a safe place of home to avoid physical contact with the outside world. It seemed at first instance an effortless way of life, but this imposition brings more challenging work for the female students as they had to concentrate on their studies along with the household chores. Numerous research has been conducted on gender discrimination particularly in working spheres and in educational institutions. Like Klasen & Lamanna (2008), highlighted the impact of gender inequality in employment and pay on economic growth, Jayachandran (2014) documented the gender inequalities with the level of economic development and her research explains that cultural factors play an important role in the countries that are poor today or having low GDP, and writes that it exacerbates male position due to favouritism. Sara Ayllon, (2021), discusses in her research about “Online teaching and gender bias” where she concluded that due to the corona restrictions all classes move online where female teachers were evaluated more poorly by the male students and by the low achievers.

The prevailing gender gap in physical classroom learning is displayed in different modes. The living example of the statement is, that in the classroom male students are dominated and keep hold of the discussions carried on in the class (Diller & Drew, 1998). Faculty of the colleges extensively use instructional technology to enhance or replace face-to-face instruction. Yet, there is less information to know how online faculty member imitates the learner. It has been expressed that online learning is, in various means, primarily distinctive from face-to-face learning (McCormack, 1998). The best example is that teachers upload their lectures online through which

the student will take help in the shape of listening to it repeatedly to understand the basic theme of the topic delivered by the teacher. Secondly, students can take notes of these online uploaded lectures and can take the basic material which is required for their term paper and their assignments. Such kinds of online activities as saving the lecture in zoom and google meet are the closest form to a traditional lecture delivery in the physical classroom.

Where there are fundamentally traditional ways of learning, then we cannot ignore the modern and transformative new methods of teaching (lectures or online instructions). Looking at these online teaching and learning behaviour of both the faculty and student's role and relation leads the researcher to highlight the presence of gender inequality and gender discrimination. Drew (1998) documented in his study about the women's college where female students are treated in a way in the classroom where they believe that they cannot be fit for online learning. This kind of behaviour creates an unsatisfactory environment and feelings where female students feel inferior and incapable of online learning.

Consequently, some researcher attempts to evaluate the results of an online learning environment and find several shades of gender equality. Currently, available data gives varied results in which some researchers produced the same traditional approach of gender discrimination where males are considered dominant members of the society (Savicki, 1996). Society gives high value to male performance than females (Blum, 1999), while some researchers like Wolfe, (2000) and Gunn, (2003) finding explore discrimination based on the gender gap. The learning environment consists of collective and individual nature, which is further sub-divided into competitive, and individuals are further varying participants for credits hours. That also observes that teachers guide and present gender topics to the students which share the traditional gender coherence. Kramarae C. &, (1990) explains in his research that it is the syllabus or courses of the subject that have been offered stereotypes about male or female orientations to the students. This kind of system that develops stereotypes about gender is thought that faculty or teachers are inclined to handle male and female students contrarily (Sadker M. S., 1986).

Online learning has been portrayed as a key to several educational tasks emerging in the 21st century. The difference between direct and online mainly depends upon the mode of communication. During the online program all the communication i.e., delivering a lecture, taking class, taking exams, doing discussion in class, and debating on different projects happen on the

online floor. Along with this, the direct lectures were transformed into recorded videos. When we are talking about online sessions, most contributors are asynchronous while indirect and physical sessions the communication and interaction are on campus and within the given time. Therefore, the online classes of educational institutions try to imitate its direct classes tradition excepting the situation that student-teacher and student communication and interaction is cybernetic or virtual.

The research work is based on how different gender are treated during online classes. The role of teachers and the attitude he/she presents during online classes with students (both male and female) is the area of concern. Plenty of research has been conducted on gender and gender discrimination in Pakistan's various cultures but research on gender discrimination during online classes was not found. The main theme of the study discusses how gender has been targeted and favoured during online classes. Along with this how male and female students at the university experience and behave with the new way of gender discrimination. This research further tries to document the student attitude toward each gender in an online learning environment and how gender is being viewed, more particularly the women's role in society.

Looking at all these objectives the reaction and coping strategy to such acts can also be part of my research analysis. To understand the fundamental picture built into the cultures, the Pakistani cultural context about the gender, particularly women's roles are discussed and explained in the analysis chapter where we can easily understand the scenario built into the culture. Along with this, how different students behave and act with each gender (male and female) is also discussed in detail. Interaction and communication of the students during online learning are part of my research analysis. (Kallen, 2007), explain that culturally diverse society where individuals decide their ethnic or cultural group attachments. Likewise, anthropologists (Roberts, 1976), argued that humans cannot survive in a society without insignificant forms of ethnocentrism, therefore this research also focused on the ethnic affiliation associated with pride and arrogance and discrimination based on ethnic attachment beliefs on the superiority to others. This type of ethnocentric malicious plays a vital role in gender discrimination. Discrimination on the bases of religion and ethnicity among the student was measured. In classrooms, discrimination can be seen in different forms like biases, stereotypes, linguistics superiority and inferiority, students with disabilities, and favoured groups. This kind of discrimination cast the group into a psychological and inferiority complex.

The research brings the teacher role during online classes with both genders and the student's experience from physical to online, as they face it novelist and a new experience. This research tries to picture the see gender discrimination during online classes while evaluating the process of the faculty by students.

1.1 Background of the study

This research deals with Gender discrimination in an Online Learning Environment among University Students of Islamabad.

1.2 Keywords

1.2.1 Gender

West and Zimmerman (1987), write that “Gender is not something we are born with and not something we have, but something we do”, Butler (1990) added with this that “gender is not something we perform”. So, here we can say those gender roles are available everywhere, but the roles are different and defined, who can perform what. In other words, gender is the socially constructed phenomenon that explains the role and practices assign to men and women, girls and boys, manners and characters associated with being a man, woman, girl, or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construction, gender roles are different in different societies, and they change with different economic opportunities, urbanization, and development (Evans, A, 2014).

1.2.2 Gender discrimination

Gender discrimination is the inclination to prefer one gender over another. It is a form of unconscious bias, or implicit bias, which occurs when one individual unconsciously attributes certain attitudes and stereotypes to another person or group of people. These ascribed behaviours affect how the individual understands and engages with others (Reiners, 2021).

Are males and females differing from one another? If we think of both gender from a merely physical outlook the evident response would be ‘yes,’ they are different. Though, comparatively, the physical appearance of a human being and the human itself is a more multifaceted creature. Moreover, the outlook and physical shape of human beings are varying in behaviour. Differences in attitude and activities are often changed on an individual level and usually, it has been seen between men and women.

Therefore, the debate on gender discriminated attitudes was developed which gives space and indicates us to prob the query: either there are different attitudes for men and women, and if so, are these differences biological or they are due to the environmental settings. The argument has been generated by various as the Nature (biological) and Nurture (environmental) problems. Sadker M. S., (1991) concluded the efforts of investigators who have studied the actuality of inborn or genetic disparities which affect the behaviour of males and females inversely and exposed that there is no proof and provision of this kind of belief. He argues with a more realistic approach that this is all about the environment and culture which make and mould the behaviour of men and women differently. He further argues that this is the enculturation of a particular culture where parents and family members instructed children in their social and cultural surroundings along with the media that create and show a particular manner of behaviour to communicate differently.

In places where the academicians get the chance for face-to-face discussion, females most possibly practice a different form of gender discrimination in which they are free from academic writing biasness which is related to gender differences in speech patterns (Karpowitz CF, 2012). Gender discrimination is giving preference to one gender over another. When a person gain advantage and the other gets underestimated based on their gender, the basis of their gender is called gender discrimination. Gender discrimination is a favouritism in which one can prefer one gender over another gender. It can be done in different fields like workplaces and educational institutions. It can also be done consciously and unconsciously like people think that some jobs men can do but women cannot. Gender discrimination is a gap between males and females. For example, in our society male is dominant. In contrast, a female gets physically, verbally, and mentally abused by a male. Men take advantage of the patriarchal system in Pakistan. Gender discrimination is created when anyone prefers one gender over another or creates stereotypes based on gender or is treated differently based on gender. For example, male teachers behave nicely with female students whereas female teachers behave nicely with male students in a class. In Pakistani society, males are permitted to do the things that females are prohibited.

Gender discrimination is supporting one gender over another for example favouring one gender in the educational institutions or at any place that gives favour to a specific gender. Gender discrimination is near to discriminating gender order and giving favour and dominant attitude toward a particular gender such as males. It is also a stereotypical phenomenon related to gender

behaviour such as some behaviours are already selected by the women and restricted in the society. Gender discrimination is created when someone prefers one gender over another. It is like when someone is low in confidence or lacks power whether it is a male or female discrimination will take place. For example, a lack of perspective whether it is male, or female will create discrimination.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Everywhere in the world, there is discussion over gender discrimination, as we have seen and observed that there is gender discrimination among the human beings in every sphere of life and how this discrimination makes its way when the contagious disease like corona spreads all over the world. Due to the Coronavirus, the routine life system is stopped, where everything transfers from physical to online. How this traditional way of gender discussion and its discrimination makes its way into educational institutions and in what way. In this research, I try to explain how gender discrimination is done in our educational institutions or what are the factors that cause gender discrimination such as race, colour, language, region, or students' performance in the class. Looking at these issues I try to do an anthropological study on gender discrimination in universities.

The reason behind the selection of this topic was that in Pakistan there is no Anthropological or any other social sciences research conducted on gender discrimination during online classes, until now. Most of the research is conducted on the regular and culturally based gender discrimination, while this study studies the discourse of gender discrimination in a new domain as institutions and organizations move from physical to online. Being part of a graduate program at Quaid-i-Azam University, I experienced that majority of the students are complaining that they were discriminated against by teachers in one way or another during their online classes, which gives me new insights and ideas to work on this aspect of gender discrimination. I chose this topic when the second wave of COVID-19 was crowning, and it was not possible to have direct (face to face) interaction with my respondents. As in Islamabad due to the widespread Coronavirus cases, all educational institutions were shifted from physical to online. As my questions were, what kind of problems do students face during the pandemic for their online classes, particularly the female students? Students' and teachers' familiarity and unfamiliarity with digital learning created new dimensions for online learning. To look at gender discrimination

through the digital way that how teachers and students behave during online classes. Teachers who discriminate against students, because of their gender, ethnicity, geography, or language basis are the real concern to highlight and finally to bring the familiarity with the digital environment and facilitation by digital tools and how the students and teachers connect themselves with this virtual way of interaction.

1.4 Objectives

- ❑ To document the experiences and opinions of the university students about gender discrimination in an online learning environment
- ❑ To collect suggestions for reducing or eliminating gender discrimination in tertiary education

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the difference between in-class and online learning environments for university students?
2. How do students have experienced gender discrimination practices in online learning environments?
3. To collect suggestions for reducing or eliminating gender discrimination in tertiary education
4. To document Pakistani cultural practices and context about gender, particularly women's role in society

1.6 Significance of Research:

Gender issues are considered one of the important debates all over the world. How different genders particularly females treated in different cultural contexts. Here in Pakistan the word gender is particularly used and considered for women. When we talk about gender discrimination women comes to mind and the role of women in society regarding man. This study is based on Gender discrimination in educational institutions specifically during the period of COVID-19 when all the educational institutions were shifted from physical to online. There are not specific women as gender but both males and females were the focus of the discussion. And that is the way the sample size is almost kept the same for the study analysis. This research study will help the overall

educational institutions that how gender discrimination happened in diverse ways in particular situations.

Gender discrimination is a serious social issue that exists in every society and Pakistani society is a patriarchal society where a male is dominant rather than, at various places and on various levels male and female both became the victim of gender discrimination. This research will help and produce a secondary source for those who want to research gender discrimination in educational institutions and wants to do further research on that topic.

This research will also introduce digital ethnography and its role in social science research digital ethnography is more complex than the traditional way of ethnographic interactions which restricted the researcher to a specific geographically defined space. This research will also be helpful for the ethnographic spatial to include individuals and groups who are breathing in digital environments facilitated by digital tools and connect themselves with virtual ways of interaction. Here this study will be different and investigate gender discrimination in a way that how and why teachers discriminate against students, second the practice of discrimination among students. Here, gender discrimination is the focus that how different gender communicates, respond, and behave with each other during online classes. This study will be helpful for the student of Gender studies, Sociology, and Anthropology where they will receive the baseline data for their further research on online learning and gender. This study will also help the planning department where they can analyze the reasons behind gender discrimination and make an appropriate plan to reduce and eradicate it from the educational spheres.

Chapter 2

2. Research Methodology

The goal of the methodology is to obtain genuine and helpful information about a specific domain of phenomena in the universe and to suggest solutions to the questions. There are a variety of data collection methods available in each discipline at any given time. I have used the qualitative method to get the desired data for my research objectives. What am I examining exactly? Gender discrimination in online classes in university. As we knew that ethnography is all about social intimacy and not about social distancing (Gary Alan, James E. Johnson, Corey M. Abramson, 2015) and anthropological research is all about the field data where a researcher visits the area, meet with local people, and collect data in the field. I had to choose digital ethnography for my data collection for this purpose. Why do I choose digital ethnography or virtual ethnography because at this stage when all over the country there was a lockdown, I faced challenges and limitations in my research as universities had moved from physical classes to online? It was difficult to conduct face-to-face social science research. It limited my interaction with the field and was forced to conduct online interviews through the modern technologically mediated means of contact.

The COVID-19 pandemic transformed and shifted the lives of the people upside down. Not only posing a danger to the health of the people but also affect the social relations and economic conditions (Goralska, 2020). Like other social scientists, anthropologists are best suited to enquire research insights into the pandemic. I tried like other social scientists and anthropologists to work on digital ethnography and collect online data for my research topic. Digital ethnography is a way of using digital products, processes, and technologies to develop digital research. The aim of

exercising digital technologies is to indicate, interpret, and portray communicative and educational interactions among individuals and groups.

Here for this research digital ethnography was used as a method to study the gender discrimination in online classes in universities through digital space on the internet with the necessity to travel (Burrell, 2009) during the lockdown. The beauty of digital ethnography is that it does not require any conventional fieldwork, nor it is geographically constrained and does not require perfect edges to conduct research. Such a kind of understanding of digital ethnography was created by (Pink, 2015) over the past 25 years.

Digital ethnography or digital field spots can be comprising whatever the web is completed of texts, videos, images, platforms, user behaviours, social relations, or an information network (carmen Lucia Guimaraes de Mattos, 2013). Looking to the need and requirements of my research I use digital ethnography for my research study because all my respondents were on a digital platform to attend their classes. For that purpose, I take permission from the concerned department chairperson and the rest of the teachers, to allow me to participate in their respective classes for my digital data collection and to fulfil my research objectives.

The present study was conducted by using modern technological devices for instance laptops, smartphones, tablets, and audio-recording apps for data collection and information during the second wave of COVID-19 in December 2020, when all academic institutions shifted from physical to online. To use a mode of online communication on the internet was advanced software applications like Zoom, and Microsoft Team for sharing class and subject-related information on WhatsApp and through email. I made contact during the fieldwork with respondents through digital means (apps) Zoom, Team, and WhatsApp where I participated and joined their classes with them to get the ultimate insight into the study concerned.

The nature of this study is qualitative, both primary and secondary data are used to study gender discrimination in the online learning environment among university students in Islamabad city. For primary data, online interviews were conducted while for secondary data research papers, journals, newspapers, and magazines were consulted. Here for this study, I also used the triangulation method where I used multiple sources to analyze data and enhance the credibility of my research study. Data triangulation also involved multiple sources to which we investigate our research problem in diverse ways.

For all the social sciences research the researcher needs rapport building where he/she makes good and reliable contacts with the respondents and for this reason, to connect with my respondents and build a good rapport building, I get help through modern applications Zoom, Team, and with female students on WhatsApp group.

2.1 Rapport Building

Qualitative research begins with rapport building after determining the study topics. It is the same as putting oneself in someone else's shoes to understand how they feel and think if you want to immerse yourself in other people's environments. In the initial days of my fieldwork, I faced a lot of problems to build a friendly rapport with my respondents. However, with time, I build a mutual understanding with them by spending time and chatting with them through various apps. You must first establish a friendly connection with them so that they will be able to discuss and share the data with you without hesitation.

It is one of the most basic and crucial techniques in the anthropological study, involving the capacity to create a trusting and understanding relationship with individuals through interaction. It will assist the researcher in uncovering people's hidden experiences and facilitating effective dialogue. It is extremely hard for a researcher to build rapport online and conduct an

online interview without meeting the person in a face-to-face meeting. The conventional researcher deeply depends on optical signs and these signs can be beneficial and productive to build a rapport. Like if we analyze the conceptual textbooks, advocate appropriate dressing, cheerful and crafting eye contact at the onset. It has been recommended that non-verbal communication and stimuli such as emojis (smiles and signs) are extremely helpful to ease the interview. Orgad, (2005) explores the online method of rapport building that in this incorporeal online meeting both the respondent and researcher are depends on the written word. I used this technique to build friendly relationships through WhatsApp communication specifically with female students and discussion with respondents on ZOOM after the online classes which helped me to get more confidence and trust of my respondents. This technique was particularly important and useful to develop the trust of respondents during online interviewing.

2.2 Participant Observation

“Through participant observation, the information about people can be easily observed and documented. This method can be applied by making people agreeable. It is the substratum of cultural anthropology.” (Bernard, 2006). Participant observation is an essential method of social research and an indispensable tool of qualitative research. To fulfil the approach of participant observation I have attended twenty-seven online classes to observe the behaviour of students and teachers, where I tried to observe and extract relevant data which meet my objectives. For attending these online classes I have asked for special permission from the concerned authority. The duration of the class was 1 hour and 30 minutes. I have interviewed thirty-three students, fifteen male and eighteen female students where I documented their views on gender discrimination in online classes.

2.3 Online Observation

Online observation is a method that is used to study communications in virtual communities in their natural settings. There are two ways of observation, one is visible where the people know that they are being observed and the other is discreet where people did not know that they are being observed and the observer is hidden. The advantage of discreet observation is that respondent knows that they are not being watched so they behave naturally. Researchers used this method to observe their respondents when the teachers have not started their lectures or when they finished their lectures. The behaviour of my respondents was observed as my mic and camera were off which they considered that the researcher is offline or not active.

2.4 Sampling Procedure

The findings of the research are influenced by the sample size of a study. The method of extracting a sample from a population is known as sampling (Baker & Edwards, 2012). There are various methods for determining the population. This is known as the sampling procedure. I have used purposive sampling to collect data and information from the targeted population during my fieldwork.

2.5 Purposive Sampling

This approach has been used to select respondents who were considered appropriate and relevant to the objectives of the study. In this approach, the researcher is in search of the right person where the respondents are judged according to the objectives and requirements. Consequently, this approach is also called judgmental sampling. In this approach, the respondent's knowledge, skills, and eligibility for the study are the critical features for the researcher. Therefore, I took interviews with those students whom I considered the right choice based on their experiences and their willingness to share information about their experiences. That is why the purposive

sampling helped the researcher a lot in the field, due to this method researcher saved time and resources. I choose fifteen male and eighteen female students from the fifth semester where they had experienced the physical and online classes and knew gender discrimination and who could explain their past experiences of university life.

2.6 In-depth Interviews

An in-depth interview takes place in a relaxed and comfortable setting to acquire complete and detailed information (Boyce, 2006). It is a qualitative research strategy that entails conducting extensive and in-depth interviews with a small group of people to fully understand respondents' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours. These are frequently conducted in person using open-ended and flexible response questions with the researcher speaking less and listening intently. As a result, the researcher and the respondents can establish a guided and constructive connection. The researcher observes and understands the verbal and non-verbal. I used this method during my research because I conducted online interviews with my respondents. "It's a type of participant observation that entails casual, unpretentious dialogue." It helps people to express themselves freely (DeWalt, 2002). In qualitative research, interviews are the most valuable tool. Informal interviews are more commonly employed in social science areas like anthropology and sociology. Open-ended questions are asked during online interviews to learn about people's subjective opinions and attitudes regarding gender discrimination and the online learning environment. They do not necessitate a set time or location. Informal interviews are based on spontaneous and everyday conversations. I conducted unstructured interviews to uncover the underlying nature of issues. Whereas, in-depth interviews are based on long-duration, face-to-face interactions where the researcher tries to get desired answers. But an online interview is an interview conducted remotely

through online chat, video, or an audio platform not face-to-face conversation. It is also called a digital interview which saves time and resources for the researcher.

My research topic as well as the situation of COVID19 pulled me to collect data and information through the online method from my respondents from which I have interviewed 33 students, fifteen male and eighteen female students where I documented their views on gender discrimination in online classes, as they can experience the physical and online classes too and they can easily describe the difference and reasons of gender discrimination. However, I faced many difficulties like disconnecting calls during the interview, voice breaking, reconnecting calls repeatedly, etc.) during the online ethnography, which is way conducting interviews online was not an easy task for me because most of the students were reluctant about the recording of the interview. I gave them confidence through my rapport-building technique and assure them that their interviews and thoughts will be kept secret and not be shared with anyone without their consent. Keeping regular contact with my respondents creates an environment where I get their confidence to conduct interviews for my research.

2.7 Key-Informant

The criterion for the selection of key informants is a person who should be from the same university where I want to conduct my digital ethnography and who knows about the research topic and have access to respondents of that setting. Because he/she can easily introduce me to his/her class fellows or beach fellows who would later be my respondents for my research. Therefore, I have selected only one key informant, and he was from Bahria University Islamabad who introduced me to his fellows. My key informant helped me a lot in the initial days of my fieldwork. Because he is also studying at the same university, that is why he was familiar with

those students whom I interviewed during my fieldwork. However, my fieldwork was based on online data collection, he helped me to contact my respondents.

2.8 Jotting and Digital Daily Diary

Human memory is poor, and we have trouble remembering information for lengthy periods. As a result, anthropologists find that jotting is the most effective method for remembering details during interviews. I used a digital diary during interviews so that I could jot down the important words while interviewing my respondents online.

2.9 Call Recording

One of the most notable qualitative research methodologies is audio\call recording. Using audio recording instead of writing notes during interviews would ensure a comprehensive picture because a researcher will be able to concentrate fully and collect non-verbal data if the entire conversation is recorded. It also keeps interruptions to a minimum during interviews. After obtaining permission from my respondents, I used this strategy throughout interviews and focus group discussions to record and save the essential information and time as well. I conducted my interviews online and recorded their responses during the call so that I could listen to them afterwards and incorporate the information into my thesis. This method helped a lot while analyzing the data.

2.10 Interview Guide

It is a technique for transferring research question concepts to interviews. Before interviewing, planned to direct the study's ideas so that the interviewer and interviewee have a productive interaction. I have also put together an interview guide with questions specific to my research as well as some ordinary questions about my topic which are attached to this thesis **annexure....** I have created questions for them that are clear, meaningful, and understandable.

2.11 Ethical Considerations

I conducted all my interviews with the informed consent of each respondent. The research topic, the study's goal, and the purpose of conducting an interview are to make it apparent to the respondents. The researcher must assure his or her respondents that the information they supply will be kept private. Their personal information, such as name, income, and other information that they are required to put out on the census form, will be kept anonymous or will not be included without their approval.

2.12 Secondary Sources

The secondary data had been taken from books and other written material and are referenced accordingly. In addition to collecting data from primary sources and the study's location, the researcher often consulted secondary sources such as books, journals, and newspapers for pertinent information.

2.13 Limitations of the study

Owing to the requirements of the research, the extent of the research is restricted to the university students in the Islamabad region of Pakistan through virtual ethnography. Moreover, for collecting primary data, respondents will be consulted from the Islamabad region. Sometimes I was not able to connect and participate in online classes because of the internet condition as the performance of the cellular network was not good. Sometimes due to load-shedding problems, I would go offline during an interview and online classes.

Chapter 3

3.1 Literature Review

In this chapter, we talk about how pandemic has affected the world and how various institutions have shifted from the physical presence of the individual to an online world. Particularly my focus is on the educational institution and how gender discrimination is practised in an online learning environment from the perspective of both male and female students. This chapter will help to understand the topic of my research “Gender Discrimination in Online Learning Environment.” In this chapter, I have collected the data from different articles, journals, websites, and other resources. International debate and discussions have been started in the field of academics about the recent technology which is internet technology. (Sosin, 1998) has tried to give us an overlook on this statement. As he is of the view that online learning provides fast information and student have better and easy access to knowledge, on the positive side it has enhanced the learning ability and made a student more responsible for his assignments. Through online education, he has all the records of classroom discussions and can follow the class easily (Brewer, 1997).

Lally, (1999) analyzes the debate about the placements in a postgraduate location and summarized that online conversation according to them is the community that is promoting gender differences. (Pollock, 2005) study on the opposing end shares findings are about different discussions and groups are that they do not replicate the male dominance in an online class as we often found in the physical class. Their overall findings of online learning are that there are small gaps and differences in discussions otherwise both the genders have a balanced behaviour for learning.

All the academic fields have moved towards the online methods of learning either they are on the national level or at the international level. Although internationally online learning was already improved with the better technology with the spread of COVID-19, this online method of learning got spread around the world. The main factor of these online classes was the interaction between students and teachers. In different regions of the world, the focus on the online tools of teaching varies from others. Few students and teachers were easy in online learning, and few got disturbance in their overall routine. So, different studies have been conducted in different regions and they produce different findings. For instance (McLaren, 2004), is of the view that according to his study the dropout ratio of students in online teaching remains at its peak in contrast to the physical or traditional classes. According to him the students who remained active and attended each class and participated in class have passed the exams and almost got the same results as they were having before COVID 19. So, the students who have shown consistency in attending their online class got good scores and grades, however, those students who did not attend online lectures got nothing in their hands apart from the failure. Another study (McFarland, 2005) has different findings they have not found any differences in grades, whether a student is learning online or attending a physical class.

The learning process also emerged in the pattern of gender differences. The females who stayed at home did not focus more on the online class and their learning than the male students. Female when stayed at home she had to look after other household chores along with the online class. She must attend other work in the same pattern as she stays home when had no classes. In contrast to this, the male member did not attend house works so they were much better at learning from an online class. The female then must give more time to their studies and when they used to

attend traditional classes their sole focus remained on the lecture, and they can get better learning. Apart from girls and boys make no more difference or less difference in their grades or GPA.

Therefore, the findings state that the process of online learning is more complex for a majority in comparison to virtual or physical classes. It has been proven by the grades or scores of the students who have participated in online lectures. While some data recommend better proceeding for online students, the results resonate that both those described on the popular had "no significant difference" (Anstine, 2005), and it just does not support the studies that have shown their result as an improved outcome from online (Agarwal, 1998) (Navarro, 2000).

Moreover, the meaning of education is to set up a guide for man's life. The education teaches them how to find the best possible means in any situation. It just enhances the ability to live a better life in the difficulties of life. Education teaches a man to change according to the situation. It means the change or development in the conduct of life. The investment in education is more than any monetary investment. The investment is more vital to understanding the pattern of life and a man depends upon this investment for his survival. In every country, it is the basic right and responsibility of every individual to get an education. However, we realize the requirements and complications, the majority would agree, and few can disagree with the statement that the role of education is to provide an opportunity for all to progress as much as they can.

Education should be a source to enable children and adults to become effective and dynamic contributors to the transformation of their societies. The focus of learning should be on the ideals, manners, and conducts which empower personalities to acquire how to live together in a world classified by diversity and heterogeneity. Therefore, education has an imperative established role in constructing knowledge and understanding of human rights. The standards they signify, and the ability needed to fortify a democratic culture.

The responsibility of education is unavoidable in engendering a new generation that empowers in resolving the genuine complications in our society. Through knowledge, information, and contacting the new advances of knowledge, enables them to solve the matters of society more logically. They not only sacrifice their time or money even some of them sacrifice their health to get the best passport to their future. Schools are the places where students learn about the separate roles of gender and where the teacher can give ideas to develop a positive attitude towards gender identity. Hence, they can organize various kinds of programs where they can give better understanding and interaction among different ethnicities. By applying for these programs, they will feel the power and rareness of ethnic identity. They are also getting knowledge and education about ethnicity and how to respect other ethnic groups. It just causes a tolerance among students and humans of this society to act more normal and humane.

Society or community is another field for learning and installing the basic morals in a person. It can be an important part of civic education; it is properly conceived as being more than just doing virtuous deeds. It can contribute to the effort in instilling the value of solidarity among races, especially teenagers. It includes the activity that stressed tolerance and harmonious value regardless of religion and race aspect. For example, the nationality module can help them to learn and know in-depth about their country and others' custom and culture. At the same time, they know the uniqueness of others' cultures. Hence, the purpose of the community program is to inculcate a sense of citizenship, whereby students learn the importance of contributing to their community, the society at large, and the nation. By doing community service, students will also develop a sense of civic duty and commitment to the nation. It can allow them to interact in other activities. It can help them to be more flexible in judging others' religions and widen their view on certain aspects of other races

Some of the students enjoyed the relaxed environment of online classes. As they have gotten a quite easy routine due to online classes. In contrast to a physical class, they need to be more active and more responsive toward teachers and class lectures. Few students believe that the online classes are time savers, as the time which they used to spend on going to university and getting home after classes or the time which they used to spend on getting ready has been saved. During online classes as it was not so mandatory for every class to turn on cameras, so students get involved in other activities behind the camera. The online classes also remain a factor of not having a grip on knowledge which can be the reason for the spoiled future of students.

As the teachers' and students' interaction became online, new ways were introduced to control behaviours and class conduct, and both the teacher and student have faced problems. Few teachers have learned the use of this information technology and how to operate these online classroom channels. The students who belonged to remote areas had also the issue with poor internet connectivity or no connection at all. The internet connectivity hindered the learning if a teacher is delivering the lecture and a student had lost internet connectivity, it means he/she has skipped the concepts of a topic which is being delivered in the class. Here again, gender discrimination has been observed as if a teacher is male and the student who has asked the question related to that missing concept from the topic shall be answered patiently or otherwise, did not answer the question. As the internet coverage and signal connectivity from a server to a client is average in Pakistan, it has created a stark difference in gaining knowledge.

The patience level of a teacher has also been faced by many students, some teachers remain neutral on background distortions, and some have snubbed the distortion. Though environmental factors always contribute to online learning. Gender discrimination and favouritism play a role here, for instance, the male teacher usually avoids asking the reason for late joining the class and

having background distortions. On the other hand, if a male student has the same issue most of the teachers do not cooperate. Due to internet issues, few students have low grades as the students who belong to villages have faced a lot due to internet quality. Few of these students remain unable to submit their assignments on time. The assignments which are submitted after due time has been deducted a few points or marks as punishment.

The economic pattern has been disturbed due to the pandemic and it has impacted the students learning as well apart from the government policies of online learning to minimize the expense of students, but still, the students must live in the hostels due to the unavailability of internet of poor connections. So, the expenses yet have not been minimized and income is also not been generated due to the lockdown policies.

However, the students have faced the issue of the non-scheduling of timetables during the class. It has also been observed that the issued timetable from the department of the institute has not been followed properly. The students are being asked by the teacher about the class conduct time, but mostly preferred to the timings suggested by the gender or the student who is closer in interaction with the teacher. So, the classes sometimes did not conduct at the time that is given by the institute. Even few teachers had conducted their classes on off days.

The learning environment for students in online classes has destroyed the real purpose of education. As the cameras of students and most of the time teachers were turned off, so the teacher did not check the student either the student is active or not in the class or what he is up to in the background. The only check, in that case, remains a question, answer session which was mostly replied to by students from the Google search engine. Those students who can actively search for the answer to specific questions remained in the eye of the teacher that they had learned the crux

of the lecture, on the other hand, those who did not search for the answer due to poor connectivity or lack of attention being under the wrath of teacher.

Most of the studies about gender discrimination have been conducted before 2000 so the evaluations of teachers and students present different dimensions. In 1973 a study was conducted to find out the correlation between students and teachers and how they were given instructions by the instructor (Granzin, 1973). The attractive thing in this study is the fact that after finding such a small correlation between student gender, teacher gender, and the ratings are given out, the researchers threw out sex as a variable altogether (1973).

Another study which was conducted in 1975 had an inverse finding such as the male students showed more value to their male teachers and females gave more preferences to their female teachers (Ferber, 1975). Therefore, the researcher finds the results that the students remain more inclined toward their gender. Furthermore, the study found that positive past experiences with women instructors reduced the preference students had for male instructors (1975).

Yet, another study had findings about gender discrimination in teacher-student relations does not occur (Wilson, 1976). However, in this study, some students contributed but did not disclose their gender. In this new category, the mean ratings for female instructors were slightly lower than the mean ratings for male instructors. Still, the researchers found this to be statistically insignificant due to the small number of people in the category (1976).

Furthermore, recent, due to the Coronavirus spread educational system is transferred from physical to online. Firstly, Coronavirus started spreading from China. In China, though the meat consumption practices historically were not prevalent, insect-eating practices go back to 3000 years (Hartmann & Siegrist, 2017) According to Chinese custom, food is thought to be the

expression of “living fully” and is the part of artistic culture and has sentimental connections to people. However, the same idea of food consumption in the Western part is more scientific (Nam, 2010).

Though we have suffered due to COVID-19 and education is among those sectors which have also been affected majorly by the economy. Therefore, there are so many misconceptions and rumours revolving in society about COVID-19. If it has been investigated, this may help many to produce the right approach to communicate the most useful information towards the control of spreading infection. Rumours have made it difficult for the community to believe in any information related to the virus. An ‘Infodemic’ is worse than an epidemic that causes fear and rumours to spread multiple times faster than the disease-causing agent.

So, after the spread of Coronavirus worldwide, every country shifted the module of work from physical to online. One of them is the education sector, especially in Pakistan. Education is among the essential elements in constructing or growing a virtuous nation (Baiyere, 2016). The eruption of the COVID-19 virus has initiated an abrupt interruption of schools, colleges, universities, and other government institutions apart from this it has suspended every activity of human beings. While keeping in view these challenging times and the difficulty faced during the online learning environment by students and teachers. E-learning became the learning structure that is conducted via electronic media. It was first used in 1999 at a CBT systems seminar. It is also described as virtual or online learning. It offers a way to share reading materials using the internet through emails, documents, presentations, or webinars.

IT has become an important part of modern education and it shows the huge involvement of ICT in the present teaching-learning process (Anderson, 2005). Educators can share study materials and lectures in the form of PPT, PDF, or Word documents by uploading them on their

respective university webpages, on WhatsApp, or through e-mails to maximum students during this lockdown. Lectures have been also taken through WeChat, by sharing audio-visual videos through e-mails, and by different online teaching apps like Microsoft Team, Zoom, Superstar, g-suite cloud meeting, and so on. The development in technologies has offered a favourable domain for teaching-learning processes.

Shirley Ardener (2020) introduces while defining Females by reviewing domains of investigation relevant for cross-cultural comparison and by requesting attention to the nonequivalence of terms and analogies in comparisons such as male/female, man/woman, and masculine/feminine. She said that before the birth of a baby, practices of gender socialization started where fathers and mothers along with other family members show concern regarding the gender. It also gives some positive and sometimes a negative vibe for showing that much concern regarding gender. Gender development researchers, like other developmental researchers, focus on questions of change over time (Ruble DN, 1998).

The expectations about gender roles are not present at the time of his/ her birth instead it depends after the birth on which kind of role he or she must perform. Here Streitmatter, (1994) explains that the behavior which is acceptable in the cultural value and societal norms are not the product of inherited understanding or inborn ability but socially constructed phenomena. This is what the anthropologist and sociologist call learned behaviour which is the product of enculturation and socialization (Streitmatter, 1994).

Previous research has shown that it has great connectivity with the behaviour of parents as to when the parents know about the baby's gender when they start their upbringing. The socialization of children that how the male children will be dressed up and indicated the colour for maleness (i.e., blue), and female children dress colours should be different (i.e., pink). Parents in

diverse cultural contexts according to their gender behave and communicate with their children differently. Cultural values indicate how to keep and take care of their children according to their gender. The tone, communication, and even behaviour is different in male and female children and babies (Maccoby, 1974).

Majority of the researcher documented that child tempt to have gender discriminative attitudes from their parental routine behaviors and the way they act in their daily activities. (Richmond-Abbot, 1983) Abbot asserts in his research and describes it through his exploration that male kids behave differently in different situations instead of women kids, and they are inspired by their parents according to their actions. According to cultural behavior, there are stereotypes in educational institutions related to male and women students. Boys are strong, creative, overexcited, and can perform well in different interesting subjects in education like science and math. Boys are physically strong and perform well in different hard-core games. On the other side boys are emotionally strong and exhibit strength, show their challenging work for the competition, like freedom, show confidence in every field, and aggression in their mood (Sadker M., 1991).

Boys normally do not express their sentiments of grief and distress. He wants to show himself and express the characteristics of being a prosperous man according to the set roles made by society. Being a male member of society how he performs his role as a successful person and exhibits his abilities to grasp the higher social status and position which are demanded by him. In his early childhood days, boys are treated by two means through which male members fortify their qualities which help them to become successful people in society. Boys are induced to do challenging work and perform well in the classroom and in sports (Sadker M., 1991). On the other side of the picture if we talk about female students there are stereotypes in the society and a

different world is expected of them as compared to males. Female is considered lenient, submissive, weak, and tend to stay more often than boys. There are different fields in academics where female students are more prominent and highly found like in the subject of social sciences, arts, literature, and fine arts.

However, if we look at the academic struggles of girls now, they are found and concentrate on other subjects which are meant to be for a male like mathematics (Fennema, 1990). Likewise, female students are found to take unusual chances than males and they are excluded from the leadership qualities. The basic assumption that society demanded and wants in a leader is the exhibition of aggression and assertiveness which are not connected with females and are not considered feminine. The wish to be regarded as feminine stalks from the wish to “fit in” in the social structure when a female pupil gets enrollment in the high school (Carelli, 1988). Though, there is a possibility in the social structure for the females to break the traditional role set for females. Sometimes that path makes many hurdles and too many hazards, and problems but not adequate remunerations (Streitmatter, 1994).

Shirley Ardener defines females by reviewing domains of investigation relevant for cross-cultural comparison and by requesting attention to the non-equivalence of terms and analogies in comparisons such as male/female, man/woman, and masculine/feminine (Ardener, 2020). We struggle with the idea that the division of humans into two and only two categories, “male” and “female,” is not universal, that “male” and “female” are cultural concepts that take different forms and have different meanings cross-culturally.

Males and females, at least “normal” males, and females, were thought to be born with different intellectual, physical, and moral capacities, preferences, tastes, personalities, and predispositions for violence and suffering (Sargent, 2005).

To look over the teacher's behavior and attitude in the classroom, we need to dig out and recognized the extent of the educational atmosphere as it is considered and existed to showcase equality. If we look at the educational history of the country, we can easily extract the result that males were found dominant in the classrooms. Therefore, looking at this debate it has been concluded that many educational theories revolve around the propensity of teacher's behavior to underpin, sub-consciously, exposed by students that are socially composed as male (Kramarae C. &, 1990). Although we affirm the belief that males and females are "equal," we give preference to males as we considered them resilient and assertive, while awkward with a female who possesses these kinds of qualities, and the reason is we presume them to be more docile and obedient (Sandler, 1996).

DRSML QAU

Chapter 4

4 Area Profile

For my research, I have chosen the area of Islamabad. In this chapter, I will thoroughly describe the area, where I have conducted my research. An area profile report is a report in which some population of the field is taken as a sample from a wider population.

4.1 Islamabad:

The capital city of Pakistan, Islamabad is in the northwest of the country on Potohar Plateau. This area has been significant in history for being a part of the crossroads of the Rawalpindi and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The city was built in 1960 to replace Karachi as the Pakistani capital, which it has been since 1963. Due to Islamabad's proximity to Rawalpindi, they are considered sister cities. Compared to other cities in the country, Islamabad is a clean, spacious, and quiet city with lots of greeneries. The site of the city has a history going back to the earliest human habitations in Asia. This area has seen the first settlement of Aryans from Central Asia, ancient caravans passing from Central Asia, and the massive armies of Tamerlane and Alexander (www.cdv.gov.pk).

To the north of the city, you will find the Margalla Hills. Hot summers, monsoon rains, and cold winters with sparse snowfall in the hills almost summarize the climate of this area. Islamabad also has rich wildlife ranging from wild boars to leopards.

After the formation of Pakistan in 1947, it was felt that a new and permanent Capital City had to be built to reflect the diversity of the Pakistani nation. It was considered pertinent to locate the new capital where it could be isolated from the business and commercial activity of Karachi, and yet is easily accessible from the remotest corner of the country. A commission was accordingly

set-in motion in 1958, entrusted with the task of selecting a suitable site for the new capital with a particular emphasis on location, climate, logistics and defense requirements, aesthetics, and scenic and natural beauty (CDA, 2018).

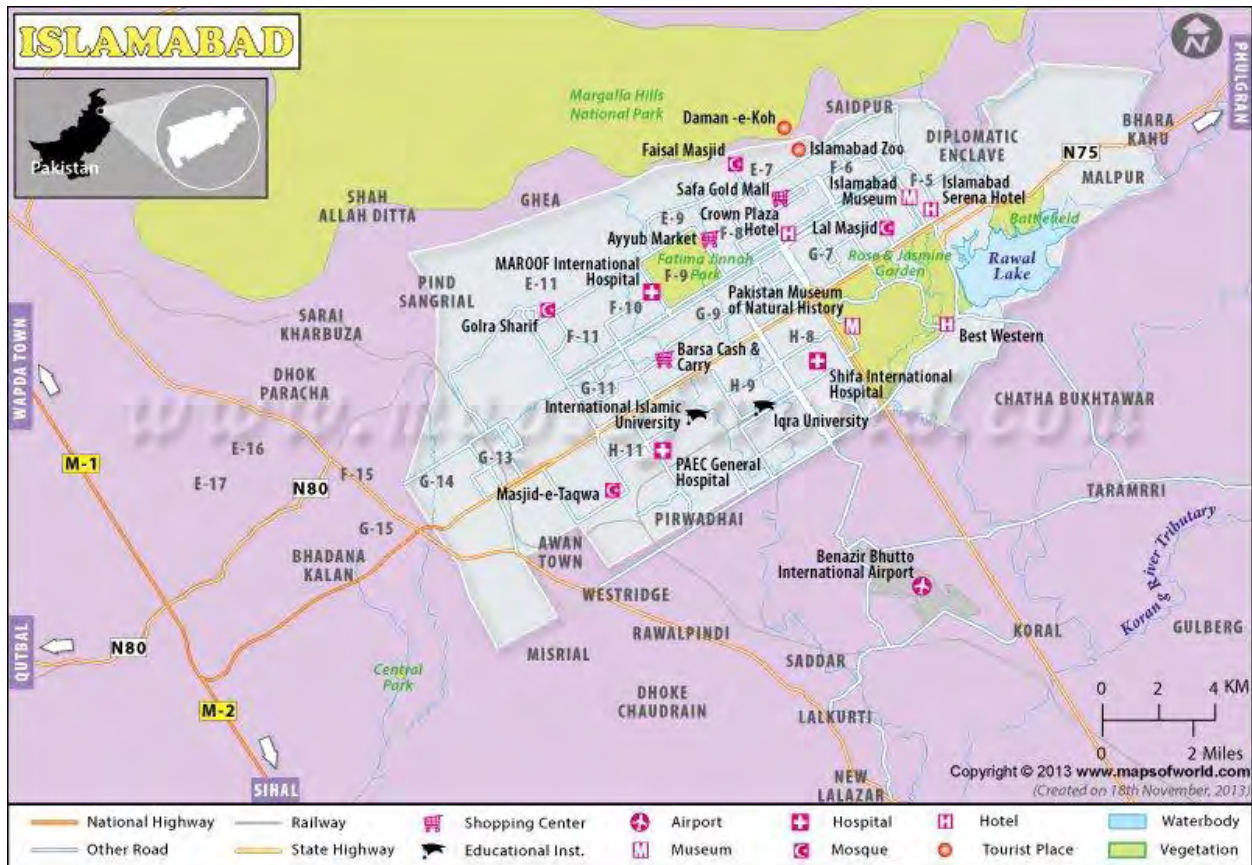


Figure 1 Map of Islamabad; Source Google Mapping

4.2 Area

The area of Islamabad is 906.50 square kilometers. A further 3626 square kilometers area is known as the Specified Area, with the Margala Hills in the north and northeast. Islamabad city is divided into five major zones: Zone I, Zone II, Zone III, Zone IV, & Zone V. Zone IV is the largest in the area while Zone I is the largest developed residential area. Zone 1 is divided into sectors. Each residential sector is identified by a letter of the alphabet and a number and covers an area of approximately 2 km × 2 km (CDA, 2018).

4.3 Language

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Government of Pakistan, 10.11% population of the city of Islamabad are Urdu speakers, 71.66% are Punjabi speakers, 0.56% are Sindhi speakers, 9.52% are Pashto speakers, 0.06% are Balochi speakers, 1.11% are Saraiki speakers, while 6.98% languages are also spoken (www.pbs.gov.pk)

4.5 Economy:

Islamabad is a gross contributor to the Pakistani economy, having only 0.8% of the country's population, it contributes 1% to the country's GDP. Islamabad Stock Exchange, which is founded in 1989, is Pakistan's third-largest stock exchange after Karachi Stock Exchange and Lahore Stock Exchange and was combined to form Pakistan Stock Exchange (Burki, 2010).

4.6 Culture

According to DAWN News, Islamabad was established in 1960, and people from different regions of Pakistan migrated to Islamabad and started living there. That is why Islamabad has cultural diversity. There are many ancient civilizations found in Islamabad. Saidpur is located on the slope of Margalla hills. Mirza Fateh Ali founded the village in 1530 AD. Initially, it was known after him as Fatehpur Baoli. Later, when the area was given to Said Khan Gakhar by Mughal Emperor Akbar for his family's services in the fight against Sher Shah Suri, the name of the village changed from Fatehpur to Saidpur. Said Khan gifted the village to his daughter (Times, 2018). The Shrine of Pir Mehr Ali Shah at Golra Sharif has a cultural heritage of the pre-Islamic period (DAWN News). Another historical place the shrine of Bari Imam, a famous Sufi saint, is located at the foothills of Margalla in Islamabad (Muhammad Umar, 2014).

4.7 Religion

Islam is the largest religion followed in Islamabad with 95.43% followers. Christianity is the second largest religion is with 4.34% followers. The Christians are focused on the urban areas. Hinduism is followed by 0.04% of followers according to the 2017 census (www.pbs.gov.pk).

4.8 Architecture

Islamabad's architecture is a combination of modernism and old Islamic and regional traditions. The Saudi-Pak Tower is an example of the mixing of modern architecture with traditional styles. The beige-coloured edifice is trimmed with blue tile works in Islamic tradition and is one of Islamabad's tallest buildings. Other examples of intertwined Islamic and modern architecture contain Pakistan Monument and Faisal Mosque. Other prominent structures are Secretariat Complex designed by Gio Ponti, Prime Minister's secretariat based on Mughal architecture, and the National Assembly by Edward Durell Stone (Blair, 2009).

4.9 Literacy

Islamabad has the highest literacy rate in Pakistan as its 88% population is literate. 9.8% of the population has done intermediate education. 10.26% have a bachelor's or equivalent degree while 5.2% have a master's or equivalent degree (Population Census Organization).

4.10 Education

Islamabad has the highest literacy rate in Pakistan at 98% (Dawn News) and has some of the most advanced educational institutes in the country. Many public and private sector educational institutes are present here. The higher education institutes in the capital are either federally chartered or administered by private organizations and almost all of them are recognized by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. High schools and colleges are either affiliated

with the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education. According to the Academy of Educational Planning and Management's report, in 2009 there were a total of 913 recognized institutions in Islamabad.

Most of the top-ranked universities like the National University of Sciences and Technology, COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, and Pakistan Institute of Engineering & Applied Sciences, have their headquarters in the capital (HEC). The world's second-largest general university by enrolment, Allama Iqbal Open University is placed in Islamabad for distance education. Other universities include Quaid-i-Azam University, Air University, Bahria University, Center for Advanced Studies in Engineering, Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology, Hamdard University, National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, Capital University of Science & Technology, National Defense University, Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University, National University of Modern Languages, Iqra University, International Islamic University, Virtual University of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah University, The University of Lahore, Abasyn University, and The Millennium University College.

4.11 Universities in Islamabad

There are twenty (20) Universities in Islamabad in total. In which six (6) are private and (14) are Government (Annexure-01).

4.12 Bahria University Islamabad

Bahria University is a Federally Chartered Public Sector University. The main campus of Bahria University is found in the lush green scenic surroundings of the capital city of Pakistan Islamabad. Along with Islamabad other campuses of Bahria university campuses are to be found in Karachi and Lahore. Pakistan Navy took initiative to establish a university that symbolizes the

stature of the Pakistan Navy with the name Bahria university in 2000. Bahria university progressively places its name in the leading growing university in higher education of Pakistan platform. Bahira University contributes to producing productive graduates who perform leading roles in economic and political activities around the world. Its multidisciplinary academic programs include Management Sciences, Social Sciences, Computer Sciences, Health, Law, Earth, Environmental Sciences, Psychology, and Maritime Studies.

The current rector, a vice-admiral, has said that *"it is our vision to make our university the best educational institute in the country"*. In 2019 in the general ranking of the National Higher Education Commission of universities, Bahria university ranked 15th. The faculties of engineering, management, health, psychology, medicine, and dentistry show the diverse nature of this university. The main campus is situated in the Naval Complex in Islamabad. Karachi campus is located on National Stadium Road where Bahria University established the Medical and Dental School. In 2008, the Institute of Professional Psychology and the National Centre for Marine Policy Research. The Lahore campus is in Johar Township. Bahira University facilitates students in various kinds of curriculum and extra-curricular activities like multiple societies (literature society, debating society, law society, and society of empowerment) and clubs (media and adventure clubs) and associations are driven by students There is a strong emphasis on community service, with a requirement that students complete a minimum of 32 hours.



Figure 2 Bahria University Islamabad; Source Researcher's photography

4.13 Location

Bahria University Islamabad is in E-8 Naval Complex Islamabad's capital territory.



Figure 3 Map of the Bahria University Islamabad; source Google Map

4.14 Vision

To become a knowledge and creativity-driven international university that contributes toward the development of society.

4.15 Mission

To ensure academic excellence through the deliverance of quality education and applied research in a collegiate environment having strong linkages with industry and the international community to meet the societal challenges.

4.16 Core Values

1. Integrity

2. Creativity
3. Excellence
4. Positivity
5. Tolerance
6. Humility
7. Self-Discipline

4.17 Physical infrastructure:

Bahria University is a lovely building at the nock of Margalla Hills in Islamabad. In which there are different department exits in the same buildings. The details of the overall infrastructure are following.

4.18 Computer/Hardware/Communication/ Electronics Labs

There are five (5) computer labs at Bahria University Islamabad. Names of the labs are OC lab, NAB Labs, XC Labs, Electronic Labs, and Media Labs. They provide resources for instructional and research purposes. Special equipment such as multimedia and scanners are also available. These labs facilitated students and faculty members by providing access to their educational activities. These labs are equipped with modern electronics machines and tools such as Spectrum and Logic Analyzers, Digital Storage Oscilloscopes, Advance Trainers for Robotics, Fiber Optics, Micro Processors, and Programmable Logic Devices. These labs facilitate students and give access to utilize the hardware research laboratories endowed with the modern latest apparatus such as Logic design trainer kits, Microprocessor trainer kits and Soldering stations.

4.19 Libraries

There are two (2) libraries in Bahria University Islamabad that are Law Library and Common Library. In the main library of the campus a collection of more than 20,472 books, forty-three printed journals including IEEE publications, 1278 CDs and Programmable latest references and research tools e.g., Encyclopedia Britannica, Logic Technology and other subject related references and sources. Among the leading library in Pakistan, The Cornelius Laws Library is placed at the Department of Law of Bahria University in which a collection of more than six thousand books are featured.

4.20 Cafeteria

There are four (4) cafeterias in Bahria University Islamabad, which are XC (old Cafe), NC (New Cafe), Capital Cafeteria and Deans Cafe. They provide decent quality food, snacks, and drinks.

4.21 Health Facilities

Bahria university takes diligent care of its staff and students. For the first aid facilitation and general OPD treatment, a medical officer and paramedic staff are present on the premises of the university.

4.21 Programs

Management Sciences

Engineering/ Computer Sciences

Engineering Sciences

Earth & Environmental Sciences

Professional Psychology

Humanities & Social Sciences (International Relations, Development Studies, Journalism and Media Studies, TV Broadcasting)

Medical Sciences

Legal Studies

4.23 BS TV Broadcasting Department

The broadcasting department provides and creates an environment for the students to think analytically and to enlighten practical attitudes toward the TV industry. This department gives a detailed history where it put light on the history, structure, and contemporary practices of the TV Industry. This department also flourishes the abilities and accelerates the critical skills where they can conduct analysis and evaluate in written and verbal forms. It enables students to discover and replicate the practical consequences of working in TV along with suitable methodologies for research in television scholarships.

Chapter 5

5 Gender Discrimination and Culture

Culture is not hidden but often present and shown in various kinds of acts, shapes, and their impact. Culture unconsciously make effort and shows resistance to change. It is the culture that instils a habit of silence on various things, and which later leads to discrimination and biasness. Culture plays a significant role and is a powerful force which moulds the mind and behaviour of the people they live in. We live in a culture of unconsciousness and denial that supports values and practices with which we do not agree. Culture replicates the norms, values and behaviours that are existed in the social and psychological aspects of that particular social structure would be as a family, group, institution, or state (Maria Nardone, 2018). It has been studied and observed that culture is transmitted through language, ritual, and shared traditional norms from generation to generation.

In every culture, there is some discrimination toward gender and particularly against females (Moheyuddin, 2005). Discrimination that existed in a culture like misogyny, female infanticide, and sexual harassment, all detrimental and discriminatory exercises against females are the main barriers to human development not only for females but to males too. Therefore, social discrimination is cited among the social class and ethnic backgrounds, along with other reasons like regional position and religion or sects. In a country like Pakistan where there is discrimination linked to the household decision influenced by the traditions, customs, and institutional cultural norms (World Bank, 2002), faced by females either are working women or female students in different educational institutions. Females are discriminated against too often in political representation, health, employment, wages, and education too along with their freedom

of choice in their day to day lives. This section adopts gender as a problem in open and online learning environments, exclusively the role of gender in learner support.

5.1 Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination has been conceptualized by the research participant in an online environment, when they were asked this question, some of the participants answered, that when a person gains advantage about something and underestimates the gain and loss of the next person based on their gender is called gender discrimination. While some of the students responded that “when a person prefers one gender to another then this is called gender discrimination.” Along with this one female student in the online class shared that *“as far as myself is considered I observe gender discrimination is a sort of favouritism in which one can prefer one gender over another gender.”* She further explains gender discrimination in different workspaces in Pakistan and particularly in universities. She said that *“it can be done in various locations like workplaces and educational institutions.* Likewise, one male student put forward and said during the informal discussion that *“it can also be done consciously and unconsciously like in a different culture people think differently about gender role and workload like some jobs are for men but not for women.”* Another respondent argued that some jobs are for man only and not for women. He replies with very confidence that like *‘nursing for women’* and *‘heavy vehicle driving for men.’*

While during an online interview one of the female students said that *“gender discrimination is a gap between males and females. In our society male is dominant and women are considered weak and dependent on man.”* But when I ask this question during our informal discussion on zoom meeting after class a male student replied that, *this is true that Pakistani society is male dominant society but the concept that women are considered weak and dependent on a man is now getting no place in the current arena.* They give examples of the female teachers

and administrative female staff that they are not more dependent on the male. They earn a good amount on monthly basis and live their life the way they want.

Asking the same question from all my respondents (students) one female student shared that, *“in our society even in our university females are physically, verbally, and mentally abused by a male student but we cannot even say something about this. Men take advantage of the patriarchal system in Pakistan.”* Here she was pointing towards the gender discrimination done against female students in the university. A male student replying about the question of gender discrimination that *“gender discrimination is done when I prefer one gender over another or by making stereotypes based on gender or treat someone differently based on their gender.”* He gives an example of his statement and explained his argument, *“male teachers behave nice towards with our female students, whereas female teachers behave nice with male students in a class.”* Another participant shared that, *“gender discrimination is all about supporting or favoring one gender over another, like in educational institutions or at any workplace gives favour to a specific gender.”*

One Female student who belongs to a rural background said that *“gender discrimination is near to discrimination gender order and giving favour and dominant attitude towards a particular gender such as male. It is also a stereotypical phenomenon related to gender behaviour such as some behaviours are already selected of the women and restricted in the society.”* She further said that *“in rural areas females are under strict observation and are not allowed to visit markets without their male counterparts. Women are considered low in confidence or lacks power.”* She explains her own experience when during class she was not able to answer the question asked by a teacher and later her fellows make fun of her.

Looking at all these responses it is concluded that gender discrimination is giving preference to one gender over another in various manners. It is also evident from the interviews

that in our educational institution gender discrimination exist and practices irrespective of the method (online or physical) of taking classes. The attitude of the teachers and making fun of the fellows make gender discrimination more active and prominent which leads to serious psychological and mental health problems among the students. Female students have also complained about having lack of less access to gadgets, like a laptop, mobile phones and the internet access when there is a male student in their home. Male students usually receive a large share of education and health spending than girls. Online learning has been more challenging for female students and face more challenging work than physical classes, as compared to male students. Females would carry household work along with their online classes and studies. Socio-cultural role of gender discrimination cannot be ignored and cannot be put aside in this digital and modern world. The superiority of gender in society and educational institutions leads to have profound consequences for the coming generation. Male students do not disturb by their family members if he is taking classes online while female students pursue their domestic responsibilities at the house like cleaning the house, cooking, dishwashing, washing clothes etc.

5.2 Role of culture in gender discrimination

Pakistan is made up of four provinces (Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) cojoined with the federally capital areas and federally administrate tribal areas (FATA) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir along with Gilgit Baltistan. All four provinces along with federally administered areas cultures are different from each other. The socio-cultural framework of Pakistani society is patriarchal. in the given social context, Pakistani women lack social value and status because of denial of their roles as producers and providers in all social roles. The preference for sons due to their productive role decrees the allocation of household resources in

their favor. Male members of the family are valued and receive better treatment than females (ADB, 2000).

Rizwan¹ explains in a very explicit way that in Pakistani society, males have the freedom to do what they want but when it comes to females, society treats them differently they cannot do what they wanted. If a female did something out of social or cultural norms, then she is treated differently and blamed with different names and tags. In a short, in our society, the things which are allowed to males, are prohibited for girls. Society treats male as the dominant one and in contrast, a female gets physically, verbally, and mentally abused by a male. Men take advantage of the patriarchal system in Pakistan.

Humma explains, that the traditional patriarchal way of society plays a critical role in creating gender roles, particularly the role of women and their identity. Social and family control over females, restrictions on their mobility, dress, gesture and even the language she uses, along with this their economic dependence is on men determine differential access of males and females to education and other basic human rights. She further argues that I cannot talk to my class fellows and with my friends in front of my family members, but my brother can. When I receive calls, I need to finish the call as soon as I can. When I attend my class online, I must cover my face or wear a niqab because I feel hesitant and fear about my male class fellows that they did not take screenshots of my photo. We females are suppressed by this patriarchal behavior.

Malika a student in the fifth semester criticizes that the role of society is to create awareness and educate people about gender disparity. But our teachers are also part of this society. They are trying during their lectures to give examples from our society and our family institutional setup.

¹ Respondent's names are masked with pseudo names, keeping in view the research ethics.

She further said, *society plays a key role in creating the roles of male and female, but it does not mean that females should be kept restricted from their basic human rights. We have the same right to access education, health, and other public places as men. But we are regarded and dealt as inferior beings based on our gender. The social structure of the society which creates gender stereotypes like men are strong and females are weak, male can fly the aircraft and females cannot. We have multiple examples within Pakistan where females perform their duties equally with their male counterparts. I wish females are more appreciated and encouraged by our teachers in our educational institutions where they face numerous hurdles and to cope up with the practicality that are unfolding in their lives.*

5.3 Provision of Gadgets and Space

Malika a student of BSc 5th semester said that *“we should also be provided all the facilities that are given to a son so that this discriminatory and outward tendency of gender can be reduced. She further explains that smartphone is the cheaper option for online education and most male students have them but not all female students own them. Malika shares, I have a simple mobile phone set and it is hard for me and for my family to buy a smartphone for me and for my brothers too. Talha Hussain shares, female students are not familiar with computers and software as they are not computer experts. My female classmates ask me for help to run their assigned IDs from university. Humaira said that “online class are too hectic as we are taking our classes and my mom think that I watch dramas or movies on my cell phone but if my brother sits and do work on his laptop or mobile phone, she never said anything to him.”*

5.4 Domestic Workload

The nature of the respective gender positionality, the ownership of digital devices, access to the internet, earlier exposure to technology, and essential training facility are significant things

that we must evaluate to decide whether home-based online work and education facilities are achievable for a developing state like Pakistan. Furthermore, distance learning is also compelled by inadequate access to the internet and computers, as well as teachers are also lacking prior experience with them. Women spend more time on domestic work with their studies. She must bear the load of both her studies and domestic responsibilities. We also observe disparities in rural and urban students, male and female students, and their facilities to switch to the online system of education.

The study shows that female students are apprehend by considerable pre-existing discrimination in primary and secondary education opportunities. Less than half of eligible females are enrolled in primary schools, and this ratio drops to less than 30% for secondary and 20% for tertiary education. An exceptionally low proportion of households have access to TV and internet, exclusively in rural areas, which shows unexpected impacts of a pandemic on students' capabilities to study from their houses. **(Reference)**

“Salma a twenty-one-year-old student in fifth semester at Bahria University said, *that with the COVID-19 pandemic her university postponed in-person classes. Online classes mean for us a different scenario, as being back to home and I wish that we had no online classes because my joint family expects me to help with the household works like cooking, cleaning, and washing.* She said that *“males in my family do not share the responsibilities and the entire pressure is on the female of the family.* Like many Pakistani rural families, the Salma family does not possess many modern-day home machines that decrease the workload. *Domestic work has left me exhausted and I struggled to complete my assignments and take my classes properly,* shares in disbelief. She said her grades and position in the class have fallen. She said that I was unable to compete with such challenging work and stress, which is why she feels that I should leave studies.

5.5 Psychological impacts on Students

Discriminations can damage the mental health of the students and such in case of the online classes. Those students who put challenging work into their studies to get good marks, when discriminated against by the teachers feel inferior. They also lose their confidence. If we see another side of the mirror, COVID-19 increased care work, females are supposed to do more care work than men. Nabeela said she took her online classes from her home when her brother and father were COVID positive. She and her mother took care work for her father and brother. That is why females keep a mental burden indicating responsibility for all the work carried on in the house. She said that such kind of psychological stress affects our university performances, particularly female students who are learning from their home in an online mode. Her experience is in her own words.

“My brother had to be hospitalized for some days due to his complicated health. My mom was shattered and most of the time she was crying.”

Rida said, *“I am studying in the fifth semester along with this I had to take care of my father's treatment and my mom's emotional well-being.”* Along with this, she expressed that *“I am responsible for my younger siblings too. Looking to all these responsibilities I struggled with online studies as some of the courses were complex and required concentration and attention.”*

However, this is another aspect of the gendered role of online education. Many female students are facing such kinds of hardships in their homes which creates and hamper their future prospect of getting higher education.

5.5.1 Lack of interest in studies

When a student put his whole effort into studies but in the end could not get a good result. At the same time, a student who did not put much effort can get good marks easily due to gender

discrimination. This leads to a lack of interest in students regarding studies. Malika said that *“I am the most active student in my class and mostly respond to each question asked by my teacher but when I saw my test and assignment results, I was in fourth number. It hurt me badly but what I should do. I lose interest in my studies because I felt that my activeness in the class harms me instead of benefiting.*

5.5.2 Low self-esteem

When teachers are practicing gender discrimination, it lowers the self-esteem of students. Given below is an experience of Abdullah student in the fifth semester.

I want to share my experience here that there is a girl in my class who is not so good at her studies. But she had a good relationship with her male teacher. Outside of the class she was in contact and even after resuming physical classes, she had contact with him. She was a favourite student of that male teacher. During exams, that teacher told her the questions he was going to give in the exam. Not only this but that teacher also gave her marks on assignments that she even did not submit and gave her excellent marks in the final exam. It hurts when you work hard but you do not get what you deserve. I studied whole nights that subject and prepared very well for the exam. In contrast, the girl scored more than me. Not only me but my other class fellows are also affected by this incident. This thing brings much negativity to my mind and regarding that teacher too. After that, I cannot study for my remaining papers with that passion, as I studied for that paper.

Students who faced gender discrimination go through psychological problems as mentioned above. They lose their confidence, and, in the end, they did not put the effort into the exam and cannot focus on their studies properly.

5.6 Types of Gender Discrimination in the classroom

The increase and severity of the COVID-19 virus rapidly demanded digital learning, which creates challenges for all students in a virtual classroom. If we see the gender stereotypes relating to the technical fields, computers and technology use have been associated with masculinity and consequently more adequate for males than females. It is therefore considered that male students have more understanding over female students in the virtual classroom based on their apparent aptitude, ease, and engagement with the computer. Teachers of opposite gender mostly create discrimination, other than that there are many other types of discrimination between students are also seen in a classroom, for example, male to male discrimination, male to female discrimination, female to female discrimination and female to male discrimination.

5.6.1 Male to Male

Where gender discrimination exists between opposite gender there is an aspect that it also exists between the same genders. Regarding this, many respondents shared their experiences in which Zain explain his views regarding the fact about the discrimination he had faced while studying at the Bahria University, keeping the concept of the flourishing, and supporting the same race, caste, culture, colour, and tradition still the thing that we people get it from our ancestors and not willing to let it go. For example, *I feel Pakhtoon prefer Pakhtoon in talking, sitting next to Pakhtoon, they astonishingly greet each other but right when a Punjabi pass by, the whole conversation turns into gossips in Pashto and ignore our presence, and we understand by spending so much time with them. The same is the case with the Punjabis, it is more likely to be the ethnic biases that had started years ago and yet continue, this type of discrimination not only existed in a specific area.* Zain explains that *during our online classes our Pakhtoon class fellow targeted*

the Punjabis as they told us “Torakay makh” (blackface). He said, I did not understand what they said but when I probe my friends, they said it is a type of abusive word.

Ali, who belongs to a rural area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said, *“I have been teased by my classmates from Rawalpindi and Islamabad at my Urdu speaking style and said that at least get your Urdu accent right. I find it very strange that my classmate behaves in such a way that I cannot ask any questions during my online class as after class they make gossip and I feel inferior.”*

Sher Aslam has a different kind of experience from his male classmates. He said, *“whenever I ask something regarding my studies or any academic help from my classmates they even did not reply to my message and email. I even ask them about online conversations on team and zoom, but they deny and said we did not receive your message.”* Sher Aslam is the topper of his class, and he said, *all the male students are jealous about my position in the class.*

5.6.2 Female to Female

As compared to male-to-male discrimination, female to female discrimination is soaring. They have prejudice treatment of other females in every aspect of life, from school life to professionalism, from clothes, shoes, race, and colour. To give an instance, a student explains the scenario when she was angry with their class fellows because they seem status-conscious and avoided her merely because she was not materialistic, so they broke friendship with her,

To explain further, Zainab Abbasi a student in the fifth semester describes discrimination she had encountered in her class. *Most girls, particularly in our university share their private gossip with other female students or with male students. This act makes me ashamed that why should I share such private talk.* Mahnoor shares her experience about body shaming, *I am fat and the rest of the girls in the class are thin and whenever we talk after class or do group messages on*

WhatsApp, they call me “motti” “fatty” which irritates me a lot, but I cannot say anything to them, they have never left a chance to degrade me about my physique.

Tehmeena said that female students support each other to some extent but *“hum ik dosri ki jan be tu ni chorty”* (we did not give space to each other). She said, *“female students feel jealous of each other. If my female classmate gets high marks, then if feel bad like my classmate Rida who got more marks than me during my mid-term exams, I cannot control how she scored higher than me.”*

5.6.3 Male to Female

Humans learn everything from the environment, human brain is programmed by the culture, society, and religion (Rizwan & Bukhari, 2013). Most the male become biased against women. Females are considered inferior in every spare of society. Salman Ahmad said, *“women cannot compete with a man as they are not the same.”*

5.6.4 Female to Male

Female students have been discriminated against in various phases as compared to their male classmates. Shaheena Saeed said, *“the assumption that virtual and real classrooms are the same, but it is not true, we face multiple tasks to perform. Our male classmates are free to join and attend our online classes. Despite having diversity and difficulties face-to-face classroom generates a structure of equality but in online classes, we the female are suffering a lot. Our male classmates did not bother our difficulties, nor did they accommodate us in our academic needs.”* Aisha and Masooma share their experience, *“after online class our male classmates want to connect with us via WhatsApp, not for academic necessities but to become friends which is impossible for us. They (male classmates) are unbelievably cheap in private messages on*

WhatsApp, Messenger, and Instagram. That one cannot discuss this with our other female classmates nor with any family members.

Nargis Ijaz said, “*we are afraid from our male classmates not because they are bad or will do something wrong, but you cannot trust everyone during online class and show your face because cyberspace has its own misuse and problems. With physical classes we do not have any issue to cover or do hijab in university but during online classes I try to cover my face whenever I attend an online class even for assignments or presentation. Male students make fun of us about our outlook or wearing veil when we are discussing our subjects or doing assignments together or sharing some academic discussion. In that case, it is hard for us to continue our study and discussion with them, but we are compelled and afraid to share our case with anyone as we want to continue our education for which we cannot keep silent and bear all the mishaps of the society.*”

5.7 Sense of Freedom

This is something interesting that students feel, and particularly female students share their views that physical class or attending university is something like we live the way we want, and it is given us like the sense of freedom. Memona, Haleema, Salma, Nargis, Shaheena and all the female students of 5th semesters said that when we visit university during normal days than we make different plans like hangout, parties, participation in funfairs and many other outdoor activities but due to corona viral disease, lockdown and shifting our classes from physical to online we have lost our sense of freedom and we consider ourselves prisoners at home. We the female students considered our educational years as a sense of freedom and enjoy our lives but at home, all knows that we must do multiple works even we do not have time to wear new clothes. To online classes don not offer us to enjoy our lives within our families and communities.

Chapter 6

6 Experiences of students about gender discrimination in online classes

During interviews with the students of Bahria University Islamabad, I have collected diverse types of experiences related to gender discrimination in online classes which are given below.

Halima, a female student shares her experience, she said.

“Once in our exam, a female teacher gave extra marks to a male student so that he can pass in that subject but at the same time she failed a girl who also needed one mark to pass.”

Another respondent Asghar Naeem said, *“the student who performed well in studies, misbehave with others, teachers did not count his fault and did not punish him but at the same time if the student who scores average in his studies did the same thing, they will punish him. So, I mostly face this type of discriminations but not gender discrimination.”*

There are many cases of online harassment found during this pandemic, one male student said, *when our classes shifted from physical to online. In our class, during the viva, many female students are harassed by male teachers, and I also observed gender discrimination where the male teacher gave more importance to some female students and gave them marks based on favouritism.*

Another respondent Saleem Shah said that *many male teachers gave benefits to female students. I have observed in online classes that the girls who behave friendly with male teachers got more importance and good grades from them. Teachers make excuses that the student is good in studies, so I gave more importance to her.”*

6.1 Opinions of students about gender discrimination in online classes

During interviewing I have collected diverse types of opinions of students about online classes. Most of the students were the victim of gender discrimination but some students said that they have not experienced gender discrimination despite that they believe in the existence of gender discrimination. But some students denied the existence of gender discrimination. Some students shared their observations and talked about their friends who became victims of gender discrimination. Different opinions of students regarding gender discrimination are given below:

A female student Bushra Rehman shared, *“girls are more emotional and sensitive than boys and they overthink every little incident or discrimination that happened with them which affects their mental health. This also affects their education and grades. It has an extremely negative impact on their personality.”*

Another male student Feroz Rizvi gave the opinion that *“teachers of opposite gender differentiate between students, not all but some of them. For example, a female teacher would give more importance and priority to a male student. Similarly, a male teacher would give more attention and priority to a female student.”*

Some of the students both male and female said, *“they did not face any type of discrimination during online classes. Fozia Irshad said, “I have not observed or experienced gender discrimination in both online and physical classes. But I have listened to many students complaining about gender discrimination in class. Teachers like students based on their intellectual abilities, not on their gender. Society plays a key role in gender discrimination as by birth society puts its norms and values on a child according to its gender.”*

Another student Sajjad Rana said, *“in university I have not experienced any gender discrimination but back in my school and college days, I faced it. Rana further shares his experience, “being an online class student that many male teachers gave benefits to female students. I have observed in my online classes that the girls who behave pleasing with male teachers got more importance and good grades from them. Teachers make excuses that the student is good in studies, so I gave more importance to her.” Teachers of the opposite gender differentiate between students. We are taking online classes for about eleven months, and I observed that male teachers have an affection for female students in online classes. Female teachers also do the same but at a low level as compared to male teachers. Most of the female teachers maintain a balance between students. Female teachers mostly try to engage all students in the same way during class. In most of the cases female teachers gave attention to girls they have a good bonding with them, this is my observation.*

Raza Jamal said, *“I have observed gender discrimination in my class, but it depends on the teachers and to significant extent yes it exists. There are more chances of gender discrimination in physical classes. I do not want to mention my teacher's name, but once he talked about female students' willingness to share their problems with him, but he did not mention male students although they are also a part of a class. Not all but some of the teachers of opposite gender differentiate between students.”*

Sadaf Kazmi shares her experience regarding online classes, *“when I took admission in the university after a couple of weeks, the university gets closed, and our classes were shifted from physical to online. For the last eleven months, I am taking online classes. So, I have more experience of taking online classes as compared to physical. I have observed that our teachers not all but some of them do gender discrimination during our online classes.” Sadaf said, “it is not necessary that teachers from opposite gender differentiate between students, but sometimes female*

faculty member support female students and male faculty show sympathy to the male students which seems unfair and is threatening the future and career of students.”

In short, the majority of student said that gender discriminations exist in both physical and online classes. Some of them said that they did not experience any type to discriminations. Some students said teachers like students and favour them based on their intellectual abilities and satisfactory performance in class.

6.2 Teacher’s role during online classes

Zubair Ahmad said, the attitude of our teacher is better during online classes but sometimes due to the weakness of internet they do not understand anything or get angry, by asking something again. Due to this we do not ask question when we did not understand or pick from his/her lecture during online classes, but we have observed and feel that when a female student ask repeatedly, she is accommodative and facilitates them against her queries.

Liaq Zaman said, *“male teachers have more inclination towards female students instead of male. Students like us who are not comfortable with female students, teachers considered them conservative and traditional and do biasness due to the ethnic and regional relevance. Though we are not against any gender role, act, or style of the student nor we are opposed to someone. So, they should treat us the way we are as we all are the student at that university and share the same platform as other students.”* Sana Ullah shared his view, *“I asked my female teacher for research supervision, she deny and said I am not comfortable with male students. In university level we face and experience this kind of attitude from the teachers. They are supposed to supervise and guide students irrespective of their gender.”*

Kashif Abbass share his experience during online classes, *“when I am presenting my presentation my male teachers stop me in various stages of my presentation but if there is a female student turn, she presents her presentation without any obstacle. When I ask him that sir you broke my rhythm so many times in my presentation, but on contrary you just praised female students when she finished her presentation. He became angry and insulted me in the front of whole class and said you do not have any respect for your teacher, nor you are intelligent like her. So, such kind of discriminations we boys face in our online classes.”*

Misbah a female student shares, *“if I do a private text to a male teacher for the academic purpose, we are afraid that this will be taken out of context and would be viewed as giving unnecessary space for harassment, as it has happened in some cases, which is now being generalized overall.”* Nilofer another student describes, *“during online class teacher behavior particularly female teacher are not good with us. The female teacher knew that we the female students doing multiple work at home as she is going through the same experience of doing their household work, but she becomes angry and abusive us during our online classes. Being the online participant and attendant of online classes I have observed that teachers were become biased against the opposite gender as they did not feel the situation and position of the students from where they are connected and their actual position.”*

Students shared their experiences regarding this topic. Most of the male students shared those male teachers give more attention to female students and they discriminate boys over girls. It is observed in online classes those male teachers have more inclination towards female students. Likewise, female teachers gave more attention to boys as compared to girls. There are experiences shared by female students where they felt the attention of female teachers towards male students is better as compared to them, but they have that most of the female teachers maintain balance in

both genders. There are few female teachers who discriminate. The ratio of creating gender discriminations is high among male teachers as compared to female teachers. However, teacher role and support should be impartial and are more important in digital learning, particularly in the condition of corona pandemic. We need to motivate students and do not let them degrade in these hard days we need to motivate where they succeed in this virtual and digital settings.

6.3 Difference between in-class and online learning environment

Comparatively, gender discriminations exist more in physical classes than in online classes. But for teachers, the medium does not matter much. If they wanted to do gender discrimination, they would do it whether it is online or in a physical class.

In physical classes, there is a face-to-face interaction between teachers and students whereas in online classes cameras are turned off therefore teachers cannot see whether student is listening to lecture or sleeping or doing something else. Similarly, in online classes which are taken from home, most of the students especially females have household chores due to this they cannot take classes properly as the result teachers offend on them. Whereas in physical classes all students take lectures with concentration and can learn properly.

As we saw that online teaching and learning create specific imperative benefits. The expenses and challenging work put into visiting the university are condensed. Secondly, classes were recorded in different apps designed for the online classes, students can access them whenever they want to get benefited from them if they miss any lecture. Online classes have enabled both teachers and students across the world to participate, share and attend their lectures, presentations, or anything they want.

Online learning and teaching show multiple challenges particularly the existing discrimination and inequalities present in our society regarding gender and class. In developing countries particularly in Pakistan, there are no separate rooms for the children and in rural areas, it is impossible to have such facilities for a female student. Along with this our country is overpopulated and most people live in the joint family system where there are four to five individuals in a family. Everyone needs their own device, and the availability of devices depends on the importance and priority of gender. As we all knew that in rural areas boy is always a priority for educational facilities than a girl.

6.4 Suggestions for reducing or eliminating gender discrimination in tertiary education

It is developed idea and to the greater extent it is true that education build and develop a country economy and society. Educational institutions play an explicit role in the development. It is the education which postulates knowledge and deliver skills to the population which give way to the young lot to reshape their personalities and bring positive change to the society. Teachers are considered as role model for their students. But discrimination or discriminations plays a key role in developing negative factors in the personality of students.

One should resist if there are being demolished and every student despite their gender should be aware of their rights. And the teacher should also treat every individual equally in class. And marks should be given based on performance in exams rather than based on favoritism. Making laws and their implementation is important. Following are the suggestions which I have collected during interviewing.

One of the male respondents said, *“there should be rules and regulations for the teachers that they would equally treat the whole class and would not make any gender discrimination or*

gave favour to any specific gender. Another female student suggested that parents should support their child in this regard so that he or she cannot be the victim of gender discrimination. Creating awareness in teachers about this and give them the knowledge that how this discrimination can demotivate and ruin the students that are being ignored.”

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Chapter 7

7 Summary and Conclusion

The current ethnographic research is about gender discrimination in online classes. This is a pioneering study on the topic. There has been no work done before on this topic in the Department of Anthropology at Quaid-i-Azam University

The current study is conducted in Bahria University Islamabad Pakistan. Due to global pandemic COVID-19 all work is shifted to online. Like other institutions, educational institutions are also shifted from physical to online. That is why I have used virtual ethnography.

In this research qualitative method is used as research design. Thirty-five interviews were conducted for data collection. In which fifteen participants were male and eighteen were female. Analysis is written based on interviews. Key informant, rapport building, and ethical considerations were also used during the research.

In this research, I have collected the opinions and experiences of university students regarding gender discrimination during online classes and collected the suggestions to eliminate gender discrimination and the varied reasons behind this act. My research suggests that online classes do not bring a productive academic accomplishment and achievement that we observe in indirect courses.

Female students often skip online classes due to their domestic responsibilities. This is the reason that they cannot do their assignments and tasks on time, which makes the teachers angry with them. Unavailability of the internet is another issue due to which teachers offend students. Many students are studying in universities from far-flung areas where there is less or no access to the internet. To take online classes, students must travel to other places in search of the internet

every day which causes them to appear late in an online class. Sometimes due to poor internet connection, they are unable to take their online classes

Conclusion

The aim of current research is to explore the experiences of gender discrimination faced by students during online classes. After interviewing it is stated that most students are victims of gender discrimination. Also, the teachers of the opposite gender mostly create gender discrimination. There are many reasons including differences in ethnicity, unavailability of the internet, domestic responsibilities etc. are also the reasons for discrimination.

Other than this some students gave the opinion that some of the students blame teachers of favoritism or discriminations because they did not perform well in their exam. It is also said that some teachers create gender discriminations, but some are loyal to their profession and gave marks according to the basis of performance in exam rather than in the basis of discriminations.

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Annexure-01

	List of Government Universities in Islamabad		List of private Universities of Islamabad
1.	Air University	1.	Capital University of Science and Technology
2.	Allama Iqbal Open University	2.	Foundation University
3.	Bahria University	3.	Muslim Youth University
4.	COMSATS Institute of Information Technology	4.	The National University of Computer and Emergence Sciences
5.	Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences and Technology	5.	Riphah International University
6.	Institute of Space Technology Butto Medical University	6.	Shifa Tameer e Millat University
7.	International Islamic University		
8.	National Defense University		
9.	National University of Modern Languages		
10.	National University of Science and Technology		
11.	Pakistan Institute of Development Economics		

12	Pakistan Institute of Engineering		
13	Quaid-i-Azam University		
14	Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University		

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Annexure-02

Interview guide:

1. What is gender discrimination in your opinion?
2. Have you ever experienced gender discrimination?
3. Do you think there is any gender discrimination in online classes?
4. Which are of the two forms (physical class or online) provides more space for the teacher to practice gender discrimination?
5. Have you ever observed gender discrimination during online classes?
6. Have you ever experienced gender discrimination during online classes?
7. If yes, then how do you face it?
8. Do you think that teachers of the opposite gender differentiate between students?
9. Which platform would you prefer to avoid gender discrimination and why?
10. Does gender discrimination affect the quality of education?
11. What are the reasons behind gender discrimination in the online classes?
12. In which ways one can reduce gender discrimination in online classes?
13. What is the role of society in gender discrimination?
14. How is culture involved in creating gender discrimination?
15. What measures do you suggest eliminating or decrease the factor of gender discrimination?

Annexure-3

Case Study 1

Name: Rabia Iqbal

Age: 20 years

Gender: Female

Rabia Iqbal is a female student of BS 4th semester, TV Broadcasting Department Bahria University Islamabad. She was living in hostel near to Bahria University but now due to lockdown she lives in her home. She belongs to Chakwal having five siblings and younger amongst them. When I asked about her experience regarding gender discrimination, she replied that once in our online class when she was given a presentation, in our group, there were three females and one male student. We were studying that subject from a female teacher. We performed very well in the whole presentation as compared to that male student but when we saw the result our teacher gave more marks and attention to that male student as compared to the female student in our group. We female students were felt that this is not good, and we feel extreme gender discrimination in this regard. Teacher should give proper and equal attention to all students irrespective of gender but based on their performance during class presentation and actual studies.

Furthermore, she said I want to share an experience of mine that I have observed. Once in our exam, a female teacher gave extra marks to a guy so that he can pass in that subject but at the same time she failed a girl who was required one mark only to promote next class. Along with this she said.

“Hamry han larkiyo ko studies k hawaly sy itni value ni de jathi q k wo kahty hain k inhon ny shadi kar k ghar he bassana hy”

(In our area people did not give importance to girls' education as they think that after marriage, they will be a household lady).

Looking to this statement I asked her that you are studying one the best university of Pakistan so how can you say like this. She replied that when I was in hostel, I can give full time to my studies and can attend classes on regular basis along with full attention and understandings. But now at home due to the lockdown there were multiple work to do along with the studies while boys have not any extra workload to do at home. Boys can give full attention to their studies, but female cannot give proper time to their studies at home.

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Annexure-4

Case study 2

Name: Junaid Khan

Age: 20 years

Gender: Male

Junaid Khan is a Pashtoon student of fourth semester from the same class, of Bahria University Islamabad. He is living in his brother's house in Barakho, who moved to Islamabad for job purpose with his family. He belongs to Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. When I asked about his experience about gender discrimination, he said that I have observed gender bias in my class, but it depends on the teachers. But in short, he said yes gender discrimination exists in class. There are more chances of gender bias in physical classes than online. I do not want to mention my teacher's name, but once he (the teacher) enters the class he just mentioned the female student that how are you all but did not mention and ask from the male students present in the class. He further said that if you have any problem and issue, you can visit my office and we can discuss it. In that time, we boys looking to each other's like aliens. He did not mention male students although they are also a part of a class. This kind of act did not perform by all teachers but one or two who give preference and give attention to female students against male students.

“Ik marthba tu ye howa k online class my jb teacher ny sawal pocha to my ny jawab deny ki kosish ki, tu uss py ussi teacher ny muji toka or kaha ky my ny apko pocha k ap bathawo? Or per hamri class ki larki ko mention kr k kaha k ap bathao”

(Once during online class, the same teacher (which mentioned above) ask a question and I try to answer. The teacher become angry and told me “I ask you that question from you”? and then she mention the girl of our class to answer).

So, we face such kind of behaviors, or we can say discrimination during online class which make us little bit angry, and we assume it unethical.

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Annexure-5

Case study 3

Name: Hamna Naveed

Age: 19 years

Gender: Female

Hamna Naveed is studying in Bahria University Islamabad. She has three siblings among them she is elder. She is living in Rawalpindi and through university bus she came to university every day. When she asked about gender discrimination in online classes, she respond that I wanted to share my personal experience here that during online class teachers asked to turn the cameras of students when they marked attendance. Some females are comfortable in doing this as the result they appreciate the girls who turn their cameras on. So, the girls who did not turn their cameras on feel degraded and awkward in front of the whole class.

“Issi din class k baad kuch larky uss larkiyo ka mazaq be urra rahy they k wo apna chahra ni dhekna cha rahi q k ghar py wo churail lagti bahir makeup ky”

(On that day after class some of the boys making gossiped of the girls who did not want to come online and show their faces. Boys said how they look like an ugly without make so that is the way they did not come and show their face)

So, this kind of behavior from our class fellows particularly from boys' side feel us awkward and we did not accommodate us during online sessions and class. This is the worst feeling ever that you have been targeted by fellow students and to be ignored by your teacher, and this is the fact which develops negativity in students against their teachers. On both platforms, teachers must

appreciate their students equally at any cost. Because some students are overly sensitive, and this thing leads them to think negatively. At the university level, you must study on your own, so if your concepts are clear then you will clear the phase easily but if your teacher is also good in briefing no matter if he/ she does gender biasness.

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Annexure-6

Case Study 4

Name: Bilawal Hayat

Age: 20 years

Gender: Male

Bilawal is a university student and a local resident of Islamabad. He belongs to a well-established family. He has two siblings in which he is the eldest. When he was asked about the term gender discrimination he replied, *“Gender discrimination is a gap between males and females. For example, in our society male is dominant. In contrast, a female gets physically, verbally, and mentally abused by a male. Men take advantage of the patriarchal system in Pakistan. There is a factor of gender discrimination present in online classes, but it is more in physical classes. There are many cases of online harassment found during this pandemic when our classes shifted from physical to online. In our class, during the viva, many female students are harassed by male teachers, and I also observed gender discrimination where the male teacher gave more importance to female students and gave them marks based on favouritism.”*

When he was asked about gender discrimination created by teachers during class, he said that *“Teachers of the opposite gender differentiate between students. We are taking online classes for about eleven months, and I observed in my online classes those male teachers have an affection for female students. Female teachers also do the same but at a low level as compared to male teachers. Most of the female teachers maintain a balance between students. Female teachers mostly try to engage all students in the same way during class. In most of the cases female teachers gave attention to girls they have a good bonding with them, this is my observation. When teachers*

create gender bias during classes, the quality of education gets affected. As a result of gender bias teachers gave marks according to favouritism, not based on the intellectual abilities of students or the challenging work they put on exams.

When he was asked about the reasons behind gender discrimination and the role of society he replied, *“There are many reasons for gender bias or discrimination in online classes. One of them is natural attraction towards the opposite gender. For example, male teacher prefers female students to male students due to the attraction of the opposite gender and the understanding a student develops with a teacher could be a cause of gender bias. Society plays a key role in creating gender bias. When a child is born if he is male society teaches him that he is superior whereas when a female is born society tech her that she is inferior. Males are superior in the way that they have more responsibilities as compared to women.”*

Further, he said, *“Here I wanted to add another factor that some students blame teachers for their incompetency. They did not put challenging work into exams and then blame teachers that they create gender bias and did not give those marks.”*

Annexure-7

Case Study 5

Name: Junaid

Age: 20 years

Gender: Male

Junaid is a university student living in Rawalpindi, he has three siblings. When he was asked about gender discrimination, he respond that, *“Gender discrimination is created when anyone prefers one gender on another or creates stereotypes based on gender or treated differently based on gender. For example, male teachers behave nicely with female students whereas female teachers behave nicely with male students in a class.”*

He further added, *“A teacher gave importance to the students based on their intellectual abilities. Teachers do like some students but not based on their gender. During in-class one can avoid gender bias because on-campus students have face-to-face interaction with teachers, so teachers must treat every student equally despite their gender. Gender bias affects the quality of education very badly. It also depends on the student that how he or she copes with such types of situations. Some students are not emotionally that strong and are sensitive. They feel it and mostly overthink about it. Some students also lost their interest in studies, they stop hardworking. And it affects their grades and demotivates them.”*

When he was asked about the role of society in gender discrimination, he respond, *“There is a key role of society in gender bias. Society teaches an individual what their roles are, and which gender is superior to another gender. Society makes boundaries based on gender. For example, there are many areas in Pakistan where the education of females is considered taboo. They thought that if*

a female gets an education, she will be able to know and protect her rights. So, they can supervise them and not let them make their decisions on their own. Mostly in tribal areas of Pakistan this concept is common. One should resist if he/she is being demolished and every student despite their gender should be aware of their rights. And the teacher should also treat every individual equally in class. And marks should be given on performance in exams rather than based on favouritism or discrimination.”

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Annexure-8

Case study 6

Name: Aqsa Saleem

Age: 20 years

Gender: Female

Aqsa is a university student from Gujranwala. After taking admission she was living in hostel, but due to lockdown she came back to her home. When she was asked about gender discrimination in cultural context, she respond that, *“In the norms of society, behaviors according to gender are already given that how a female should behave and how a male should behave so society is a base of gender bias. Men are considered superior in Pakistani society, and he supervises women according to his will. So, from the very beginning society make the mindset of the child. In this way, the rights of an individual are being demolished.”*

When she was asked about her own experience regarding gender discrimination, she shared that, *“hmere ghar me aik laptop hai or me or mera bhai online clesses lete hen baaz oqat hmara class ka waqt aik hi hota hai or laptop bhai ko de dia jata hai”* (In our home there is only one laptop, me, and my brother both take online classes. Sometime the timing of our classes is same, but laptop would be given to my brother). She Added that there is one room available for taking classes, and that room is given to my brother so he can take his classes without any disturbance, and I must take classes in front of everyone and must do the house chores at the same time. Due to this I cannot give concentration to the lecture which then further effects my performance in exams and assignments. She said that in our society sons are preferred over daughters.