



FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

# CHALLENGES IN WOMEN'S ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

## An Interview Study

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# Abstract

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- Aim:** Women in Pakistan face many obstacles, challenges, and gender stereotypes in their educational journey. Therefore, the goal of this research is threefold: to examine the factors that female HE students identify as obstacles and hurdles they have had to overcome to establish themselves in HE; to examine what enables some women to overcome them and successfully establish themselves as HE students; and last to address what gender stereotypes female students in HE have encountered in their educational journey and how they have dealt with them.
- Theory:** The analysis was based on Connell's framework of gender relations in four dimensions and Bronfenbrenner's theoretical framework of the ecological system.
- Method:** The researcher used a qualitative research method with interviewing technique to collect data. Ten research participants were selected through purposive sampling and interviewed through Zoom. The research is limited due to the lack of time and resources and includes only the women who are already enrolled in higher education.
- Results:** The study notes that the themes: Father as head of household, women are socially and culturally subordinate, gender division of labor, travel and security risks, urban-rural divide, the role of government and educational institutions, and enabling factors that also help Pakistani women at higher education level build a positive social circle.

Taken together, this points to the importance of the role of the father as the most important factor in the daughters' access to higher education. The support a woman gets for higher education starts from home and the other factors affect her educational journey with some enabling factors and some obstacles. But a woman can overcome these hindrances to make her way to higher education if she gets support from her parents, especially her father. The findings of the study also show that patriarchy is present in Pakistani society and male members of Pakistani society as fathers support their daughters in terms of higher education. But other male members are not in favor of women's education and have been found to be a barrier to women's access to higher education in Pakistan.

### **Acronyms and Abbreviations:**

HE - Higher Education.

MFEPT-Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training.

UNESCO-United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

GER- Gross Enrolment Ratio (Education).

## Foreword

Without the grace and power of Allah, this long and arduous journey would not have been completed. This journey, though unconventional and sometimes disrupted, has always been driven by constantly challenging forces in my heart and a strong desire to grow, learn and achieve. At this moment, I feel a great sense of pride, joy, and most definitely a relief to have reached this milestone in my life.

Tremendous thanks go to my husband Mehran for his unwavering love, constant support, and encouragement. He gave me the strength and courage to realize my goals. He kept his faith in my ability to complete this project when I had misplaced mine. He instilled in me the energy to persevere when the road seemed too long to finish. He listened, supported, and was simply there, every step of the way. This project is as much a result of his efforts as mine – I could never have done it without him. I also thank my beautiful daughters Minha and Mirha who were a source of inspiration and comfort with their lovely smiles in times of stress and anxiety throughout this process. I love both of you more than you can ever imagine. Further, I would like thanks to my family and friends who always guide and support me when I fall into trouble during research. I am very grateful to my mother for keeping me connected to my Pakistani roots and motivating me during my research. This research is also passionate about being part of the Pakistani education system. The researcher is highly grateful to Andreas Ottemo for his supervision, motivation, and sympathetic suggestions without which this study would have not taken this shape.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Education plays an important role in society, as it will help in the development of family, society, and nation. Education should provide opportunities for self-fulfillment; it can at best provide a rich and challenging environment for the individual to explore, in his (or her) own way (Barskay, 1998). Education is a key that can provide opportunities for self-awareness and self-fulfillment to every individual whether male or female. It contributes to male and female abilities and skills to solve problems of social, political, economic, and domestic nature and helps to explore new ways to deal with them (Annette, 2011). Education can enhance social development and welfare. Additionally, it can increase civic and social engagement and active citizenship, and subsequently democratic procedures (Campbell, 2006; Helliwell & Putnam, 2007). Higher education is also called tertiary education that takes place after secondary education or high school education. Pakistan higher education is provided by universities, colleges and professional institutes. Higher education offers opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills and enhances chances for personal wellbeing. Moreover, the capability to be educated is significant in the attainment of other capabilities (Sen, 1999).

Education is the fundamental right of each woman. Highly educated women can contribute to the development of the nation in a meaningful way. Women's education can play a vital role in establishing an advanced and well-organized society. Women in Pakistan are however facing many hurdles in the way of getting higher education. In Pakistan, women are facing many problems regarding access to education and especially higher education. Women in particular have limited opportunities to acquire higher education and attain professional and technical degrees (Khan, 2007). Parents prefer to educate their male child because it secures their family's future and become an earning hand for the family. It is also observed that early marriages, society, cultural norms, and pressure to arrange dowry for girls are big barriers in the way to women's higher education. It is believed by many that women should only concern themselves with households and the upbringing of children. Therefore, educating girls is a waste of money and time. Females in Pakistan are the most deprived segment of society. In recent years, the government has introduced various policies to empower them but they are not successful. Gender inequality has persisted in the higher education sector due to various socio-cultural and economic issues (Mehmood, Chong, and Hussain 2018).

Gender inequality in Pakistani higher education is a consequence of persistent discrimination prevailing through the education system from an early age. Girls lag behind boys in access to schooling (Tembon and Fort, 2008) Pakistani society is still conservative and follows orthodox Islam, which views coeducation as a big threat to society. Many parents think that coeducation causes physical damage to their daughters. They also have concerns about their future and think that after

studying in a coeducation system, no one will want to marry their daughters. This belief often leaves no other choice for girls but to stop higher education (Mehmood, Chong, and Hussain 2018). Women suffer gender discrimination because of the prevailing socio-cultural climate in Pakistan (Sen, 2001). Education was related to awareness of women's social, political, and legal rights. In Pakistani society, women enjoy a subordinate position as compared to men due to cultural and customary practices (Malik and Courteny, 2011).

The latest education policy that came out in 2017 sees both men and women as equally important for the development of Pakistan (Government of Pakistan 2017), according to Mehmood, Chong, and Hussain (2018). Since its inception in 1947, the state of higher education in Pakistan is not satisfactory and policymakers, who develop a coherent policy to reform the education system, neglect the sector. In Pakistan, Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education was just 10% from 2015-to 16, which is lower than in many other developing countries in South Asia. For example, the GER of India in higher education was 24%, followed by 21% in Sri Lanka, 16% in Nepal, and 13% in Bangladesh for the same period. However, the enrollment of females in higher education has increased from 36.8% in 2001 to 47% by 2014, but it is still far behind to catch gender parity (MFEPT, 2017)

In Pakistan, Only 8% of the relevant age group of 17-23 years are enrolled in tertiary education. Most of the universities and their campuses are concentrated in urban centers and more developed regions of the country, hence restricting the accessibility of millions of youth in rural and underdeveloped areas to access higher education opportunities. Out of 120 districts in the country, 65 districts do not have any university or campus (MFEPT, 2017).

In many parts of Pakistan, the formal education of women is even banned or criticized badly. Since the incident of 9/11 when the United States started the war on terror, Pakistan has been a country that also has a history of religious extremist groups. Fata, Khyber Pakhtun Khwa, and Swat valley in Pakistan are the hub of those religious extremist groups who took control and imposed their own laws. According to those religious extremists, women are not allowed to get an education, but only religious education. Targeting education, especially the education of women and girls, was a means to politically empower the Taliban. Their patriarchal Islam already oppressed women and girls. Education for them is only religious education, the reading of the Quran and hadiths, and contemporary education was declared a source of endorsement of Western thoughts, values, and obscenities. This was a clear pretext for the bombing of 213 government and 7 private school buildings (Ali and Zeb, 2014). UNESCO (2010) estimates that approximately 120,000 female students and 8,000 female teachers were killed in attacks on women's educational institutions in Swat in 2009. Pakistani women face many hurdles in gaining their basic right to education. The war on terror, which



enforces Islamic law and keeps women in their homes, creates fear in Pakistani society, and especially among Pakistani women, about receiving their basic right to education.

### 1.1. Aims of Study

We know a lot about how differences in material conditions and broad cultural norms regarding gender influence Pakistani women's opportunities to enter HE negatively. Those patterns are still pervasive and worthy of further investigation. Further, not so much is known about what enables some Pakistani women to overcome these hindrances and establish themselves as HE students. In particular, not so much is known about what stereotypes and prejudice Pakistani women meet as female Higher Education students. The aim of the study is, therefore: To explore hindrances and obstacles to Pakistani women participants in HE and to investigate, What enables some Pakistani women to successfully establish themselves as HE students.

### 1.2. Research Questions

The focus is threefold and the research questions are:

- 1) What do female HE students identify as hindrances and obstacles they had to overcome to establish themselves in HE in Pakistan?
- 2) What enables some women to successfully overcome these and establish themselves as HE students?
- 3) What gender stereotypes have women students in HE encountered on their educational path?

Due to limited resources and the short research period, the research is at a limited level. This includes 10 women from higher education levels in Pakistan, who have been interviewed for this study. The interviews were conducted online. Therefore, the research data are collected in recorded form that is convenient for the researcher to transcribe later and allows the researcher to recall, and comfortably analyze the themes later. The thesis ends with conclusions drawn from the analysis.

### 1.3. Significance of the study

The results may focus on important issues for policymakers to tackle problems in women's access to higher education in Pakistan, particularly as these pertain to academic, social, financial, cultural, religious, and gender stereotype factors. The research will hopefully also motivate Pakistani women by demonstrating how women survive these hurdles and make progress in the field of education. This research will be beneficial for Pakistani women by demonstrating how some women cope with hurdles. In this study, the researcher selects participants that are studying at higher levels in universities. They are getting higher education. These research participants share their struggle stories, what problems they face, and how they overcome them. So, this research will be a motivation for

Pakistani women and shed light on how they get a voice, speak, and struggle for their educational rights.

#### 1.4. Statement of problem

Pakistan is facing many problems regarding education especially related to female higher education. Women get opportunities now a day but there is a need for more consideration regarding women's education. The problems women meet are related to family, society, culture, and economic fields. There is a wide gender disparity in opportunities for education, quality of education, and financing of education (Tembon & Fort, 2008). Many women in Pakistan are not able to earn their education goals and they are even unable to attain basic education. In this situation, it is very hard for women to access higher education, as Pakistani women face many problems social, cultural, religious, and gender discrimination are some of them. They get fewer opportunities as compared to men not only in education but also in economic, political, and other fields of life as well (Daraz, 2012; Bari, 2005).

#### 1.5. Statement of Sustainability Relevance

According to MFEPT, (2017), in 2015, Pakistan signed a global declaration and framework of action titled the '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals and committed to achieving 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UN General Assembly adopted this Agenda on 25th September 2015. SDG 4 focuses on education. SDG 4 aims to achieve 7 targets. Target No 4.3 relates to technical, vocational, and higher education. The full text of SDG Target 4.3 is given below:

“By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university” (United Nations, General Assembly, 2015, ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, page 17, SDG 4, Target No 4.3).

The study pursues the United Nation's Sustainable Goal 4-Both ESD goals 4.3 and 4.5 are particularly relevant to women's education. (4.3 by 2030 and 4.5 by 2030).

- 4.3 by 2030, “ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university”.
- 4.5 by 2030, “eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education”.

#### 1.6. The scope and limitation

In this research, not all problems related to women's access to higher education will be considered. Pakistani women face many problems regarding access to education and particularly higher education,

including limited educational opportunities, poverty, early marriages, lack of financial support for education, academic freedom, lack of funding, and educational resources provided by the government. The focus of this study is on challenges identified by females at the higher education level and how, even with these challenges and barriers, some women successfully establish themselves as higher education students and make their place in higher education. Therefore, this study also investigates how women handled those entire barriers in their educational journey and which sort of gender discrimination stands in the way of their education, and how they overcome these.

## **1.7. Review of the Thesis**

The study is conducted to address the challenges in women access to higher education in Pakistan. The whole thesis is organized in five chapters. The first chapter is about the introduction of the research topic. The second chapter provides the detailed information about the related literature on barriers and challenges to women education and the theoretical framework. The third chapter deals with the research methods, in which I explained the methods and the ethical considerations that were observed in this study. The fourth chapter presents the results of the study in the form of themes, and the final, fifth chapter discusses and summarizes the results of this study.

## **Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework**

The study is conducted to address the hindrance and obstacles faced by Pakistani women on the way to higher education and what allows them to overcome these. In this chapter, I will provide detailed information on my literature review and the theoretical framework of my study. The literature review includes the historical background of women's education in Pakistan, political movements on women's education in Pakistan, barriers and challenges to women's access to higher education, enabling factors to women's access to higher education in Pakistan, and the current state of women's access to higher education in Pakistan. Then the theoretical framework section has a special focus on the selection of theories and the purpose of this study. This section also puts light on the theories, which are used to analyse the study and will be applied to collected data regarding the situation and challenges to women's access to higher education in Pakistan.

### **2.1. Historical Background of women's education in Pakistan**

Historically, Muslim reformers such as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan have sought to provide education to women, limit polygamy, and empower women through education. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was a prolific writer of Islam and the Quran with an interest in modern education, which he wanted to impart to Muslims in India. He was the founder of MAO College, which later became the first Islamic college to offer Western higher education. Later, graduates of his college played an important role in the founding of Pakistan and provided a group of educated political leaders to Pakistan (Wasti, 2010).

Quaid-e-Azam who is the founder of Pakistan also emphasized the importance of women's education. Quaid-e-Azam said, "Women should make all efforts to get education which serve as a tool for progress and development besides helping them in overcoming the inferiority complex that comes due to male domination in the society. Only education can give women the confidence and wisdom that is essential for making them useful members of the society" (Butt, 2011).

When Pakistan was declared a separate homeland different feminist groups and women's organizations were formed to promote women's education. Under different Government laws and policies, they try to promote women's education, open new institutes for women, and open the gates of jobs for educated women. However, there is a visible change in favor of women's education noted in the regime of Benazir Bhutto. She was the first woman elected to lead a Muslim state.

The regime of General Pervez Musharraf was a fabulous phase for the empowerment of women, whose thoughts were more liberal compared to others because the mass media became free and the means of communication were spread to the remote areas of rural settlements (Arab et al., 2013, p. 26). The educational history of Pakistan shows that women's

access to higher education faced many barriers. Still today, women in Pakistan are struggling hard for getting higher education. Past research showed that gender inequality, cultural barriers, early marriages, and social norms are the major factors that affect women's access in the way of getting higher education. In Pakistan, where large numbers of girls remain deprived of literacy, any discourse on women's higher education might sound out of place (Shamaas and Khattak, 2018, p.36).

## 2.2. Political movements on women's education in Pakistan

In Pakistani society, there are secular liberal feminism and modern Islamic feminism political movements. The aim of both feminist movements is a state that engages a central role with both Islamic and secular perceptions for the social and political development of the country. That is the only similarity in both movements, i.e. that they want their state on the way to progress.

Secular feminism is more in support of the laws that are in the favor of gender equality and ban gender discrimination against women. They believe that women should be equally treated as men. Liberal feminism has its roots in the first wave of feminism that focused on women's education and equal rights of women. According to Serez, (2017, p.63-64), Feminist discourse in Pakistan is dominated by two streams: secular liberal feminism and modern Islamic feminism. These two currents are not unique to Pakistan. Secular feminism advocates equal rights for men and women and views feminism as a fundamental extension of universal human rights. Leading contemporary secular feminists in Pakistan include Shahnaz Rouse, Fouzia Saeed, Farida Shaheed, Khawar Mumtaz, and Nighat Said Khan. Unlike their Islamic counterparts, secular feminists also advocate the separation of religion and state. In this perspective, Islam is seen as a problem that women are fighting to overcome.

Women's access to education was the key achievement of the first worldwide wave of feminism (the 1860s–1880s), when sex-segregated basic and secondary schools were introduced in the U.S., Russia, and Europe (Dentith, 2016).

Modern Islam feminism also supports women's education and women's rights but they also emphasize many limits on women's freedom. They limit women's freedom so the women cannot travel alone even for the sake of education. They are also against the coeducation system in education and working-class women's mobility limitations are their focus. They do not criticize women's education but they suggest some conditions for women's education and according to liberal feminists, these conditions become hurdles in the way of women's education.

Moreover, modern Islamic feminists say that they are not fighting for equal rights for women and men, but for the status and rights that Islam gives to women.

## 2.3. Barriers and challenges to women's access to higher education

There are various hindrances and challenges in women's access to higher education but some of the barriers are often from their childhood and get worse with time. Due to cultural norms, the birth of a girl is considered a burden on the family, because a girl is dependent on the male member of the family. The girls are undervalued compared to the male member of their family and society and treated as minors and ignored and unable to get their basic rights. In this situation, when it comes to higher education for women, if some of the women reached that level they are still undervalued and faced a tough time making their place, in gender discriminating society. There are many efforts and policies to promote women's education in Pakistan, but they are still ongoing and it seems difficult to address them.

Despite the many promises attached to female education and efforts made at the international level to increase female literacy, barriers to women's education continue to persist. In developing countries, girls' education is constrained because of socio-cultural factors and patriarchal norms. The most affected were working-class women who had struggled most of their way into higher education confronting lack of finances, parental support, and the added burden of household chores (Tayyaba Tamim, 2013, p.165).

Security risk was reported to be an apprehension for many parents. The parents reported that universities in Pakistan often receive threats from extremist groups, which concerns parents about the security of their children. This fear was reported to be more so for female children; the parents believed that women are fragile and will not be able to make their way back home in case of emergencies (Ali, Jumani, and Ejaz, 2015). Gender discrimination is felt most strongly in the area of decision-making. Females register the sharpest inequality in policy formulation and curriculum evaluation (Shaukat, Siddiquah, and Pell, 2014). Patriarchal norms of the patriarchal power structure of Pakistani society have been reported to be a major constraint on women's education (Hertz and Sperling, 2004).

If educational institutes are not available nearby traveling for girls becomes a major obstacle. Travel is seen as a threat to personal security. This is a practically strong factor in deterring girls from entering higher education as institutes are likely to be very distant and even if boarding facilities are available there are possible incidents of sexual harassment and sexual abuse to consider (Sathar & Haque, 2000; World Bank, 2007; UNESCO, 2010). Women are neglected in each sphere of life. The world of men and women is different in terms of education, employment, and health. It's shown that women face discrimination in getting a professional degree to get a higher position (Batool, Sajid & Shaheen, 2013).

According to Malik and Najeebullah (2016, p.113),

economic constraints are also a major barrier in the way of women's education. Most conservative families spend money on males for higher education purposes. In this way, women

do not get proper financial support from their families. There is a need for scholarships and job opportunities for the provision of educational access. Security and educational institution outside of the city is also a barrier in the way of higher education for married females.

## 2.4. Benefits of women's access to higher education

Higher education substantially increases women's awareness of their legal rights. Of greatest significance for women are the laws relating to divorce and inheritance rights. Whilst awareness of these laws represents a significant step forward, there remain substantial hurdles, which prevent women from claiming these rights (Malik and Courteny, 2011).

Higher education has the possibility of empowering women, ushering in social change, and creating economic independence (Shamaas and Khattak, 2018, p.54).

Educated women have a greater sense of control over their lives and more power and control over resources within the family as compared to uneducated women. They get social recognition, which helps them to get an insight and have an awareness of what is undesirable and unfavorable about their current situation. The educated women can perceive a better situation and the possibility of attaining it. She can realize what is within her reach and what she should do to affect the improvement (Usha & Sharma, 2001).

According to Munawar and Akhter, (2017, p.80 )

The education of a female is in fact education of her next generation. Therefore, media and welfare associations should play their role in the change of minds of people in Pakistan. This is necessary for the uplift of women and the progress of Pakistan to meet the demands of the age.

Higher education can be considered a prerequisite of an open civil society based on merit. It helps in the understanding of societal norms; gives individuals self-reliance, and discourages discrimination based on gender, beliefs, religion, and social class (Kramarae, 2000). Educated women can become empowered and have increased status and autonomy. They can enjoy this empowerment at the community or regional/national level as well as within the family/household (Friedmann, 1992; Zafar, 2004). The awareness gained through education also affects women's health in many ways. Research studies have revealed that educated women are less likely to suffer from poverty, illness, and malnutrition (Scully 2006). Studies show that education leads to a reduction in women's fertility rates; it reduces the number of live births and infant and mother mortality rates (Murphy and 2007). It is believed that higher education also enhances the decision-making power of a woman and broadens her choices. Highly educated women are more independent in case of marriage and choosing a life partner. Previous research also showed that uneducated women rely a lot on male members of their family, before marriage her father and brother have the right to decisions about their life, and after

marriage her husband and in-laws. On the other hand, an educated woman is independent of her decisions and choices. Despite all the benefits mentioned above, still, women's access to higher education is one of the major emerging issues in Pakistan. The problems women face to access higher education in Pakistan are societal norms, security risks, social, cultural, religious, early marriages, distance education, and gender discrimination.

## 2.5. Enabling factors to women's access to higher education

The primary enabling factor that motivates Pakistani women to access higher education is their family and parents. In Pakistani society, women are dependent on their parents for their decision and financial support, and for pursuing higher education; they need their parent's support and financial assistance both. Other factors also motivate a woman in this way like their own will to get higher education, establish a career, gain more respect, reduce gender discrimination and become independent. If one woman succeeded to get higher education and pursue a career, she will become a role model for other girls. Through her success, she gives a positive message to society and cultural barrier elements that if women are valued and get opportunities they will become a valuable increase in the progress of her family and country. Then other girls from her family and society will follow in her footsteps and once a woman sets a good example, the others will get their way. It can be observed that in recent years in Pakistan the enrollment rate of girls at higher education levels is getting better despite the cultural barriers. This trend will be helpful for the development of Pakistani society and economics (Maqsood *et al.*, 2012).

The other factors are some socio-economic factors through which a woman can change her social status with the help of higher education and escape from the limitation of cultural and societal boundaries. It is possible if women consider the other factors like their self-esteem getting a higher education and becoming successful and independent by doing something to break the boundaries and gender discrimination. Educated women are more aware of the advantages and disadvantages of each aspect and they have good control over their life choices such as marriage, career, and legal rights. Another factor favoring women's access to higher education is that in urban areas there is a widespread belief that an educated woman can help her family more than an uneducated woman. Educated women do house chores and give financial assistance to their families and are more independent in mobilization. Therefore, with the assistance of an educated woman and due to her financial support, her family becomes more prosperous, and the male member of the family will also be less stressed in terms of responsibilities as those are shared by the educated woman.

As demonstrated above, many enabling factors motivate Pakistani women to participate in higher education. However, along with the barriers and challenges still, the majority of women are struggling



for their rights and access to higher education. I have not found much about the factors that enable women to access higher education. In previous research, we have found the issues on women's access to education, the factors that influence women's access to higher education and the problems associated with women's access to higher education. I will try to find some of the factors that enable women to access higher education. If we can find the factors that facilitate women's access to higher education, it will be easier to motivate these factors to improve women's access to higher education in Pakistan.

## 2.6. The current state of women's access to higher education in Pakistan

The education of women in Pakistan remains a highly perplexing issue with deep roots in many socio-political, economic and cultural problems.(Khalid and Khan, 2006, p.315).

“The current political environment undoubtedly promotes women's educational opportunities, but cultural attitudes towards the education of girls remain strongly biased and largely unchanged. Although successive governments have announced various programs to promote female education, they have been unable to translate their words into action because of deep-rooted political, social, and cultural obstacles.” Thus, the educational status of women in Pakistan remains low and is in fact among the lowest in the world. “Giving preference to sons is a phenomenon that is deeply rooted in the patriarchal systems. In Pakistan, it is a practice enshrined in the value system. Sons are the focal part of the family; it is up to them to ensure continuity of, and protection for, the family property and they have economic obligations towards their parents” (Malik and Courteny, 2011,p.32,39).

Distance education is also an opportunity for Pakistani women to access higher education. Cultural and societal barriers are still there.

Factors behind the promotion of distance education for women include the lack of educational opportunities in deprived areas of Pakistan. But in some cases, besides having educational facilities in their areas, some women are not allowed to continue their education because of traditions, cultural restrictions, economic problems of family, social issues, family responsibilities, and restrictions of the formal system that enables women to become empowered (Munawar & Akhter, 2017, p.80).

Pakistani women face social and cultural hurdles on their way to higher education. Culture and society play a very important role in determining a man or woman's individual position in society. Pakistan's cultural environment sets different rules for the higher education of Pakistani women. Pakistani society is not aware of the impact and results that society and the country can have from highly educated women. The tradition and culture of Pakistani society view women as subordinates and Pakistani society has the power to control women as subordinates. The role of women in Pakistani society is weaker and more

submissive. As a result of traditional and cultural conditions in Pakistan, women suffer and are unable to exercise their basic rights in the field of education. The importance of higher education for females in Pakistan is not well recognized due to a lack of awareness about its prospective outcomes and a host of other factors, which need to be promoted (Ahmed and Zeeshan, 2014). It has been reported that parents often decide to terminate girls' education due to economic constraints, social norms, and security risks (Khan, 2011).

The traditional social structure and norms of Pakistani society limit women's access to higher education. Pakistan is an Islamic state with the cultural tradition of Muslims and the values of Islam. Islam as religion influences most aspects of Pakistani society with its cultural and social dimensions, which include the education system and the impact of various laws and policies. According to Islam, women have the same right to education as men, but there are also some restrictions due to purdah and hijab. This is the reason why the coeducation system in Pakistan is criticized. However, most higher education institutions in Pakistan are coeducational, which is also a barrier to women's access to higher education. Access to higher education is a right of every woman, but they are not able to gain this right because Pakistani women face many challenges related to educational institutions. Many of the higher educational institutions are co-educational and their parents think that their daughters are not safe in co-education with other men.

Access to higher education is a right of every female in Pakistan and can be considered a moral and social duty to achieve a sustainable society. A conservative mindset hinders female emancipation. The socio-culture dynamic of Pakistan is slow-moving and essential, universal, educational improvement is going to take time. Taking into account the prevailing norms of society, it is recommended that the expansion of female higher education take place in all-female institutions rather than co-educational ones (Shaukat & Pell 2015, p.108).

In educational materials and textbooks, the role of the man is described as strong and dominant and the role of the woman is a weak member of society and they are subordinate. According to Durrani, (2008, p.607-608).

The dominant subject positions offered to Pakistani men in the curriculum are related to religious leadership and the military. The strong association of the military with the Pakistani identity constructs the Pakistani nation as highly gendered where men are portrayed as the defenders of the nation and women are subordinated to and portrayed only as them.

Many of us know the case of Malala who is an activist for female education in Pakistan; she belongs to the Pukhtuns family. Pakhtun is living in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including tribal areas, and northern Baluchistan of Pakistan. Malala Yousafzai, who also belongs to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northwest Pakistan, is known for her human rights advocacy and especially for women's education.

Tehrik Taliban in Pakistan who are against women education attacked her. Later she moved from Pakistan, continued her education abroad, and became a prominent activist for women's rights and women's education in Pakistan. The majority of Pukhtun people are against women's education. They think men have the only right to taking decisions, education, and employment.

Islam gives men the role of protector and provider for the family, so it is believed in Pukhtun society that there is no need to educate women to be part of the workforce unless the family circumstances make this a necessity. However, Pukhtuns do not like working women, either. A woman who works is seen as a disgrace to the family honor, as well as giving the impression that the family men are not capable of earning good money for the family (Shamaas and Khattak, 2018, p.164).

## 2.7. Theoretical framework

In this section, I will mention theories related to women's access to higher education, how gender stereotypes affect women's access to higher education, and the social and cultural aspects of this issue. I will draw my work on Connell's well-known framework on gender relations in four dimensions and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory (1979).

As I am using Connell's framework on gender relations this means I am interested to investigate the structure of gender relations with aspects of power, production, cathexis, and symbolism. I will use some of the subdivisions from gender relations in four dimensions according to my research area. I will take the aspects from the first dimension of gender relation to situate this research as concerns power: direct, discursive, and colonizing.

The other theory is Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory (1979) which allows me to address the other perspective of my research interests like how the parents, family, school, social circle, relatives, community, cultural norms, educational institutes, and economical factors contribute and affects women access to higher education as an enabler or hindrance.

The situation, I am investigating will be related to the theme of Connell's framework on Gender relation in four dimensions and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory (1979). Connell's framework will be used to address the barriers women face to achieving higher education and gender discrimination as one of the important factors in this regard to getting their educational rights.

In addition, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory helps us to elucidate how the other factors contribute at different levels as a facilitating or challenging factor, as it is divided into five systems around the woman's environment, from her parents to societal and cultural norms.

### **2.7.1. Gender relation in four dimensions**

The theoretical framework, which I have used in my research, is the Connell framework on Gender relations. The aim of including this theoretical framework is to allow me to identify different aspects of gender relations. The framework organized in four dimensions according to the structure of gender relation: power, production, cathexis, and symbolism. Furthermore, each dimension addresses some particular substructure of gender relations. I will take the theme of power as a gender relation in my research work on how men command and rule over women.

According to Connell and Pearse, (2014, p.72)

Power, as a dimension of gender, was central to the Women's 'Liberation concept of 'patriarchy' – to the idea of men as a dominant 'sex class'... Women's Liberation recognized that patriarchal power was not just a matter of direct control of women by individual men, but was also realized impersonally through the state.

Like in Pakistani society, a male member is the head of the family and most of the time the father plays the role of the head of the family and takes decisions about the female member of the family. After that, the rule follows the other male members like the brother and husband of the women. Men of the family control the woman in form of taking decisions in her life. Women are dependent on men for moving into Pakistani society. In my research, power will be taken as both impacts like positive and negative on women's education. Women are facing gender discrimination in the form of power but in Pakistani society, men's power is also considered as the protective role of women where fathers promote their daughter's education despite the cultural and social barriers.

Connell and Pearse say, (2014, p.73) regarding production, consumption, and gendered accumulation as a dimension of gender:

The 'sexual division of labor was the first dimension of gender to be recognized in social science and remains the center of most discussions of gender in anthropology and economics. In many societies, and in many situations, certain tasks are performed by men, and others are performed by women.

In my research, I will be attentive to the aspects of the above perspective as it highlights how specific tasks are performed by women and others by men. It is being in Pakistani society, the responsibility of women to bring up their children and stay at home. This mindset of the specific role of women suggests that women work for their families and kids and sacrifice their rights in favor of middle-class men. Middle-class men of Pakistani society are often not liberal enough to send the females of their families for work and earning. There are also the other aspects that select some specific fields of study for girls' higher education. These fields or professions are considered safe and respectable for women

in Pakistani society if they are limited. It is assumed that since the majority of women belong to this profession or field of study, the likelihood of interacting with other men is minimal and they are in a safe environment.

According to Connell (2014), Understanding emotional relationships is a gender dimension:

Women are more responsible for taking care of children as compared to men, and children are emotionally more attached to mothers as compared to fathers. Fathers are considered as earning hands of family and breadwinners so they have an emotional gap towards kids.

In this research contribution, the terms discourse as a gender dimension that is related to cultural norms has a wide scope. Cultural norms refer to the beliefs, customs, laws, traditions, and ideologies of society. The symbolism of gender relations will change according to time and due to that change, a shift will also occur in terms of gender rights. In Pakistani society, cultural and societal norms are not in favor of women's higher education but when people see other educated women who set good examples and through their empowerment, they are giving a positive impact on family and country. Through such kinds of events in society, there is a positive shift of attitude in the families of people living in urban areas. Now some of the people living in urban areas send their girls for higher education despite barriers.

Connell and Pearse say, (2014, p.77) about symbolism, culture, and discourse as a gender dimension,

Society is a world of meanings. At the same time, meanings bear the traces of the social processes by which they were made. Cultural systems reflect particular social interests and grow out of specific ways of life.

In this research, society and cultural norms play a very important role in women's access to higher education. Moreover, society has formed through the social process and later formed various cultural aspects on a broad scale. Therefore, if women's access to higher education as a social act changes positively and society adopts its benefits as a culture, more Pakistani women will get access to higher education in Pakistan.

### **2.7.2. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory**

The purpose of using this theory is to explain what factors from the surrounding environment affect women's access to higher education through an ecological model that is organized into five systems, which are interrelated within communities and individual relationships. Bronfenbrenner divides Ecological Systems into five different environmental systems: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem, and the chronosystem. Microsystem is the immediate level of this theory

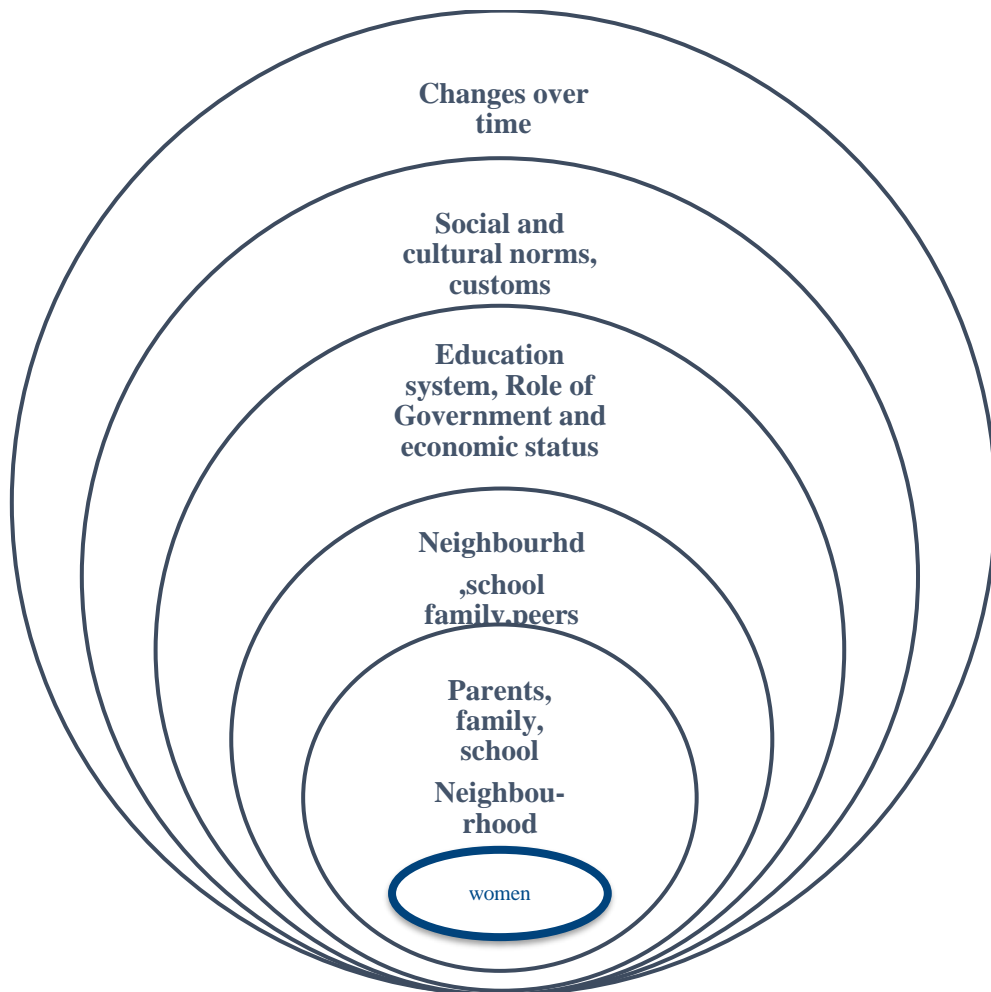
that contains the environmental settings regarding child development such as family, peers, religious organizations, and school. Microsystem plays a very important role and it has lifelong effects on child development. Exosystem includes the aspects like parents' economic situation, extended family, and neighbors. Macrosystem encounters the attitude and ideologies of the culture.

In my research, I will use some aspects of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. As I examine women's access to higher education concerning the factors from the women's environment such as their society, culture, and community. Each of these ecological systems is interconnected and has a relationship and interaction with all aspects of a woman's life. In my research work, I will emphasize the aspects of the microsystem, which take into account the immediate and have a close connection to a woman's life, such as her close relationship with her parents, peers, and teachers. At the next level, the mesosystem, a relationship is established with the microsystem, where women establish a link between their educational institution and their home, and between their family and their community. At this level, according to the theory if a woman's parents are in support of her education and motivate her toward her goals to get higher education this attitude affects a woman positively. On the other hand, if her family and parents do not support a woman she will be affected negatively, and even if she wants to get higher education she will lose interest because she knows her efforts are useless.

The themes focused through the exosystem may not have a direct link with the women's access to higher education but affect her indirectly towards her goals. Although a woman may not be in direct connection to her extended family members and neighbors they leave an impact on women's life. If there is a trend among her family members and neighbors to don't send the females for higher education so they also advise her parents to don't send their girls for higher education. Moreover, sometimes the economic status of her parents also affects a woman's access to higher education at this level and if her parents are not financially supporting her education she will be unable to pursue her goal. Therefore, the financial status and thinking of her relatives become a hindrance to getting higher education.

The next aspect is social and cultural values that form the macrosystem of the theory. Social and cultural values are a very important aspect of this research as they play a very important role in Pakistani society to women's access to higher education. Women who have achieved higher levels of education also face social and cultural barriers, as shown in the previous chapter. However, when a woman successfully achieves a higher level of education, her role and contribution to Pakistani society are prosperous. This may also be a factor that promotes women's access to higher education and changes over time at the chronosystem level as women successfully establish themselves at the higher education level.

## Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory



## **Chapter 3: Methodological Framework**

### **3.1. Research Methodology**

In this chapter, I will discuss the method and procedure for data collection. The researcher used a qualitative research approach using interviews in data collection. Qualitative research is a method of gathering, analyzing, and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual (non-numerical) data to appreciate insights into a specific phenomenon of interest (Gay et al., 2006). The qualitative research approach will help to get many views from those on the ground enabling me to come out to concrete conclusions and recommendations. Qualitative research is a holistic approach that involves discovery. Qualitative research is also described as an unfolding model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from high involvement in the actual experiences (Creswell, 1994). Qualitative research is less structured because it builds new theories and it also focuses on human behavior from the participant's point of view. An interview method is used to answer the research questions and carry out the study. It is an approach that allows the researcher to explore and investigate real-life contexts.

#### **3.1.1. Data collection methods**

One-on-one interviews with ten women were undertaken. The interview also includes some open-ended questions that give more details about the opinion of the participants. Interview is essentially a structured conversation where one participant asks questions, and the other provides answers. In a research process, choosing interviews as a tool is not just adopting a method of data collection. For conducting interviews, you must be skilled in how to conduct this process, how to design the questions, how you can ask further details about the topic, and how you conclude your results. Irrespective of the type of interview, the primary objective is to elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2014). Before interviewing the participant of the study the researcher informed the participants about the aim of the study. A consent letter was sent to the participants of the research. The researcher informed the participants, introduced herself and briefed her aim of the research so that the participant could feel comfortable sharing her information and know the agenda of the research. The researcher also informed the participants about the time, duration, cause, and agenda of her research before the interview so the participant was prepared, motivated, and ready to speak about the topic. The participants were available during featured interview time. The researcher took time on Zoom meeting for the interview and all the participants of this study were aware of this technology. That is they knew how to use this application because it is mostly used nowadays and is easy to access and use. Moreover, the researcher of the study in Sweden contacted the research participants through technology and Zoom is a good platform for interview techniques as the interview can easily be



recorded on Zoom and transcribed later for further details. The researcher allocated some extra time for the Zoom meeting and added some open-ended questions to provide more detail on the relevant topic, aiming to allow the participants to express their experiences and narrate their struggles. For this study.

### **3.1.2. Research Participants, sample criteria, and sampling**

Participants for this research are ten Pakistani women belonging to the urban areas of the city Lahore of Pakistan. The age range of the selected women was 25 to 30 years. The age group of women 25 to 30 years was chosen because this age group enrolled at the higher education level. Moreover, the age group of women selected are more open in their views according to my perception and experience. They speak more about their experiences at this stage of their life. This is an advantage for the study. The aim of the study was to identify the barriers and challenges Pakistani women face in pursuing higher education and the factors that help them establish themselves as higher education students. Thus, the participants in the study were selected Pakistani women pursuing higher education, and they disclose their path to higher education in Pakistan. Moreover, in Pakistan, the language of instruction in higher education institutions is English. Therefore, the researcher conducted the interview in the English language, which saved the researcher time in transcribing the data. Since the interview was conducted in English, it was easier for the researcher to find themes and ask questions as they were already written in English. Moreover, since the participants also use English as their language of instruction, it was easy for them to express their opinions in English.

Regarding the primary collection of data, the participants were interviewed online through Zoom due to the limited travel option to Pakistan. The online interview makes it easy to access people who live far. It's a good option but Pakistan is facing an energy crisis so, before the interview, I also make sure the availability of a stable internet connection for the research participant that not disturbed us during the interview. The researcher first discusses the aim of the research and then takes informed consent from the participants for the research. The researcher obtained signed informed consent of the participants of this research after sending an email to them to inform the cause of the study and arrange a Zoom meeting. Some further detailed notes I called them later to add more details. Then snowball sampling guide me to get a small portion of the target population. The Snowball sampling method is used by researchers to find participants through personal and professional contacts (Cowan, 2001). Fifteen Pakistani women at higher education level were contacted for the interview but only ten of them agree for the interview.

### **3.1.3. Data Analysis**

The information provided by the participants of this study was analyzed through thematic analysis. Schematically, this means that the researcher transcribes the interviews, assigns codes, works on

theme identification, and writes up. As the data was analyzed, through thematic analysis, so first, the transcribed data, was reread for finding initial patterns, and later the themes were generated. In the next step, the themes are named, and finally, the extraction from is data written in the form of themes.

As Creswell (2018) describes, analysis will be continuous throughout this study: Data analysis is an ongoing process during the research. It involves the analysis of participant data, and researchers typically use both general analysis steps and those that occur in a specific design. More general steps include organizing and preparing the data, an initial read-through of the information, coding the data, developing a description from the codes, and thematic analysis.

The interview method was suitable for this study. But while doing thematic analysis its not easy to find themes because the responses from the research participants were not same. In some questions, their responses were not clear or in some interviews, I found the differences in their views. I reread the interviews to find the similarities and differences of different participants' views and form themes and then name those themes. After finding the themes the responses got from the research participant on particular theme put under their headings and analyze those themes to extract the results of the study.

### 3.2. Issues of Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985 and 1994 in Bryman 2012 p. 390)

proposed alternative criteria in to assess qualitative research, termed "Trustworthiness". It is often used in qualitative research instead of the concepts more appropriate for quantitative research such as reliability, replication, and validity.

While collecting and reporting the data collected during this research researcher ensure the confidentiality of the participants of this research so their names and other personal information are kept confidential in this study. The participants of the research are informed previously and a consent form was signed by the participants that their participation in this research is voluntary. The cause and purpose of the research and the interview with participants were clearly stated on the consent form.

The data analysis of this research was conducted with accuracy and provided details. For the data analysis the data get through individual interviews with the research participants and the interview was in the English language. I will make some notes during the interview but the interview was also recorded and later the interview was transcribed word to word. The data was collected by the participants who are Pakistani women and higher education students. The research participants were higher education students so they speak the English language well and about the research concern more openly. After the interview, common themes were generated from the collected data.

The problem of trustworthiness in qualitative studies can be addressed by using credibility (Creswell, 2013). Credibility in qualitative research aims to ensure that the results of a study accurately reflect the views of the participants in the research. To ensure the credibility of this research, a member check was conducted. This involved asking participants to comment on the accuracy of the interview transcripts and whether the final themes and concepts accurately reflected their views of the phenomena under study.

### 3.3. Ethical Consideration

The researcher considers research ethics while considering research participants.

Vetenskapsrådet (2017) has eight recommendations that are suitable for every researcher to follow: Inquire about members of the research. As a rule, analysts will share the facts about their investigation, deliberately raise and report the starting points for reasoning, disclose the strategies and results, disclose your commercial interests and other affiliations, not use the results of the investigation without authorization, keep the investigation organized, strive not to harm others (people, the environment, and animals), and so keep the investigation organized. (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017).

As the researcher decides on the research method, she also sets the ethics according to chosen research method for conducting the research. To conduct this study I have considered the informed and voluntary participants. They have the right as autonomous persons to voluntarily accept or refuse to participate in this study; and I don't pressure participants into signing a consent form (Creswell, 2013). A researcher must respect the participant's emotions towards the research; avoid collecting harmful information and respect the privacy of participants. In a research process, the researcher must consider his ethical position towards the research subject, and especially when the research is about some human behavior or some stereotypes, ethics must be given top priority. In this research, the researcher will talk about the challenges of women's access to higher education, and especially how one of the barriers namely gender stereotypes affects women's education. While conducting the interview the researcher give respect to the opinion of the woman, as they are part of Pakistani society, face some challenges, and are sensitive towards the topic of research. The researcher must be honest towards his research subject for sorting their problem, give respect, carefully conduct the research process, and the main concern of the research must be purposeful for the research subject and community. The researcher may not harm the research subject. The researcher's ethical obligation starts with a research project that his research must be beneficial for the community and society that address the issues faced by the society raise voice to overcome that problem. The ambition is also that the outcomes of the research are also affecting positively. In addition, contribute in a good way to the welfare of humanity and the community.

Participation in the study has been voluntary and could have be withdrawn at any time up until publication, and P1 to P10 are used as pseudonyms to provide as much anonymity to participants as possible. Further, the school name and specific geographical location would not be mentioned, and the raw data would be stored securely.

## Chapter 4: Results

The results of my research show how the participants in my research think about obstacles, challenges, and factors that enable them to successfully establish themselves as HE students and discuss what gender stereotypes female students in HE have encountered in their educational journey.

After the basic introduction of the research participant, I asked about family background, social or community norms, educational and institute support, goals and plans, current educational status, and the enabling factors to higher education. From the participant's responses, themes are created to understand the hindrance and enabling factors of women's higher education in Pakistan. The first theme: father as head of household addresses the significant role of father and power of male role as father in access to women higher education in Pakistan. The second theme addresses the division of labor based on gender taken as an obstacle and stereotype that men perform some specific roles and the others are for women. The themes of women being subordinate according to society and culture emerged and the rural-urban divide deals with some of the obstacles that female students faced on their way to higher education. The themes of enabling factors and the role of government and educational institutes emerged in the support of women's education as some of the obstacles also arise but female students overcome those and establish themselves as higher education students. As together all the themes which emerged in this research some of them played as the role of enabling factors which promote women access to higher education and some of them hinder women access to higher education in Pakistan.

### 4.1. Father as head of household

We already know from the previous research that the Pakistani family system is patriarchal. Moreover, one of the major findings of this study is also that Pakistani families are patriarchal. Therefore, the male member is the head of the household like a father, because the eldest member of the family is the head of the household and after the father, the other male member of the family, his son, is responsible for the household. In Pakistani society, men are considered the head of a family because they are generally the main source of income and the man's main responsibility is to take care of his family, while the woman is responsible for the household and taking care of her children and family. In Pakistan, women are still considered subordinate. They are not allowed to make decisions in their own lives and relate to their families. Most families still practice the seclusion of women. Women are not allowed to move in the society freely and in the middle-class family, a male member of their family to protect them must accompany women. Women are treated as the lower ranking and minor people in the family. The head of the family, the father, makes all the decisions for the women of his family in terms of feeding, education, spending, and marriage. Therefore, the majority of women in Pakistani

society depend on a male family member to decide their lives. Before marriage, their father and brother play this role, and after marriage, women rely on their husbands to make decisions. One of the participants, P1,

in my research expressed her views as follows:

My father chooses the area of my study and subjects for me, as he thinks this area of study has a good scope for my future and thought that even after education girls are more responsible for house chores. My parents have always emphasized the quality of education my brother and I have been receiving since the very beginning.

Her response can be understood as reflecting the power dimension of gender relations as Connell and Pearse (2014, p.72) describes this as follow:

The power of husbands over wives, and fathers over daughters, is an important aspect of the structure of gender. This is still an accepted idea in much of the world, even in modified forms such as the idea of the father as 'head of the household.

According to this participant P1, her father gives her higher education, which is important. The father plays the role of an enabling factor to give his daughter a higher education. Again, it is perhaps the indirect factors of the environment, the cultural norms, and the mindset of the people her father was surrounded by that are not in favor of equal education for daughter and son. Most other participants said that their parents, especially fathers, encouraged their daughters to pursue higher education, as reported by participant P4:

My relatives are against my higher education and they have often advised my father not to send their daughter to university. However, my father does not care about their advice; he always guides me and supports me to pursue my higher education. Thanks to his motivation, through I can get higher education and overcome the gender stereotypes that exist in our society against women's higher education.

We can see that the father has a promoting influence on women's higher education. According to my participants, the role of their father was identified as a support on their way to higher education. The role of fathers in their daughters' higher education is very important and they are role models for their daughters. Fathers' attitudes towards higher education also inspired their daughters and showed them how to take charge of their educational journey. The father as the head of the household is a factor that gives women access to higher education. The father is the male member of the family and promotes the education of his daughters, while the other male roles in the family and society treat women as subordinate and assume that it is part of Pakistani culture and a male right to be dominant, and treat women as individuals of low rank in society according to their culture. We can say through the lens of Connell that the role of the father in her daughter's education is very important and an aspect of the power of Connell's framework relates here. The role of the father is beneficial for women's higher education at the micro and macro levels.

## 4.2. Women are subordinates according to society and culture

In Pakistan, the law and constitution state that both men and women are equal but in reality, the situation differs. In Pakistani society, all social and cultural norms are in favor of supporting men that men are superior to women. It also exists in every sphere of Pakistani culture and society that women are in lower ranks than men. The male-dominated class of Pakistani society believes that education, freedom of choice, financial independence, and mobility are the rights of only men. Restrictions on women are set by male family members to ensure that women do not engage in activities that bring shame to their family's reputation. One of the research participants, P10, says about women as subordinates in Pakistani society:

I think still our society is conservative and narrow mind when it has come to higher education for women. In our society people think that education is only important for boys, it is only the right of male members to get higher education, and that is the reason parents from the middle class and poor families do not send their daughters for higher education or even sometimes- basic primary education.

According to the participants in my study, it is clear that women are still not independent when it comes to making their decisions. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) exosystem allow me to say that the extended family, neighbors who form a society, and the economic situation of the parents influence women's access to higher education. The social and cultural norms of Pakistani society play the role of barriers and the participants in my study believe that society and culture have hindered women's progress in higher education. We can say by using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory that the attitudes and ideologies of culture determine what status a woman has in Pakistani society and also the role of the extended family and relatives concerning the status of women. And in Pakistani society, both culture and extended family relations are very much in favor of considering women as subordinate and not giving them the same opportunities as men. And when women get higher education and have a career, they will fight for their status and want to see themselves with the same rights as men. This is not acceptable to those who are in favor of those cultural ideologies that control women in society and even some women think that as subordinates of men, they are safe in the protection of the male members and they should respect them, if the women accept men as superior or high ranking according to the cultural ideologies, then they do not face any cultural criticism.

Other factors, such as the financial status of a woman's parents, also determine a woman's status in society, according to the views of the participant, P10 the exosystem which includes the financial status of female parent determines her access to higher education. Middle-class women experience more criticism and interference from extended relatives in their personal lives than rich women do. Middle-class parents are not financially strong enough to enable their daughter to pursue higher education. After higher education, it is difficult for them to marry a suitable educated man and arrange

their daughter's marriage according to the social culture and norms. They, therefore, face criticism that they should not send their daughters for higher education instead of spending the money for their marriage.

Other participants, P3, views also reflect that Pakistani women are treated as subordinates:

I remember how my relatives and neighbors always consider that women are less than men are and they think a woman cannot do anything without the support of men if they did so they consider humiliating the male member of their family and keeping the respect and grace of family a woman must be treated as minor.

The findings of the study also suggest that the treatment of women as subordinates is seen as respecting their families and the male members of the family. That the submissive role of women evokes respect and grace in society. The expectation of the woman to be obedient to the male member of the family, to consider his will as paramount, and to play a passive role, is also one of the great gender stereotypes that women encounter in their lives. When women are not given the same rights as men in property decisions, in the choice of their life partner, and sometimes even in very basic needs. This also reflects how strongly patriarchy is rooted in Pakistani society and influences women. Patriarchy is not limited to women being treated as subordinates by the male members of society, but is also present in the form of a gendered division of labor. According to the division of labor, a woman limits herself in her household as much as she can or is forced to. This theme also emerges in my study as some study participants said that they experience the division of labor in Pakistani society.

#### 4.3. Division of Labor on basis of gender

In Pakistan, most women spend their time at home doing house chores and being responsible for bringing up their kids. On the other hand, males spend their time earning money and being responsible for all the financial support for their families. The data obtained from the interviews with the research participants confirm that the gender division of labor is present in Pakistani society. Girls forgo their careers and opportunities even when they are educated enough and capable of doing so. Nevertheless, they are criticized and restricted by their family and society for the fact that their only job is to stay at home, run the household and bring up children. All these services in the form of housework that they perform for their children and family are unpaid and therefore they are treated as minors or subordinates. Society and the family do not appreciate their services, while they appreciate and respect men for their careers and financial support to the family. It is also observed that they consider women's education unimportant because it is just a waste of time. After all, in the future, a woman's only duty is to serve her children and family. One participant, P7, relates:

When I came to know that my parents would not allow me to pursue a career, even after getting my higher education, I lost my interest in my studies and think that all my efforts are in



vain. After that, I only did house chores and was not allowed to establish a career like my brothers to become financially independent.

Participant 7 believes that she has access to higher education and that her parents' negative thoughts regarding a career after education have made her lose interest in her studies because she knows that the results of her efforts are fruitless. Some of the parents are in favor of higher education for their daughters. However, daughters face the stereotype that their brothers are better able to make a career since they will be the breadwinners of their family after their fathers and women are still financially dependent on their brothers after their fathers.

Another participant P2 express her views:

I do agree that a prominent part of our society does not consider education important for women as according to them they are made for the household

The study thus suggests that the gender division of labor is an obstacle for women, even if they have completed higher education. Since Pakistani society is male dominated and thinks that higher education is the right of men, this thinking becomes a barrier to access higher education in Pakistan. Even though women are motivated and aspire for higher education and in some cases are supported by their families, there are still many barriers to their access to higher education because this is the mindset of a large section of Pakistani society.

Many participants stated that they have experienced gender bias in their families and society. The views of my research participants clearly show that it is not easy for a woman to pursue a career even after acquiring higher education and it occurs as a postponed barrier after higher education. This is because, in Pakistani society, women are always seen as housewives who are responsible for household chores, and if they aspire to have a career, it is an added burden to their duties. And it is a stereotype that it is only men who pursue their careers as women's main duty to serve their families. In Pakistani society, it is also believed that a woman is not safe from other men in the workplace and while traveling, whether for her education or career. Traveling alone without a male family member is also an obstacle. This is the reason why most parents do not approve of their daughters working and pursuing a career. They believe that when they become financially independent, they will find male companionship and wait for a male family member for travelling as a burden and want to become independent. The next theme of my research relates to the travel and security risks associated with women's access to higher education.

#### 4.4. Travel and security risks

Pakistan is a country with Islamic values and a conservative culture and norms regarding women traveling alone. Due to the weak transport system and long distances between educational institutions, it is risky for female students to travel alone. Most universities are located in urban areas that are overcrowded and have expensive transport systems. Women in Pakistani society are not allowed travel alone due to security risks and the risk of sexual harassment.

Parents provide transport for their daughters so that they can travel safely. In most cases, male family members take on the task to take their daughter or sister to and from educational institutions. When choosing an educational institute, parents also make sure that it is close to home so that it is convenient and safe for women to reach. Sometimes girls want to join an educational institute but due to long-distance and traveling issues, they change their decision and choose a nearby educational institute as it became difficult and expensive for their parents to afford long distance travelling expenses along with their education expenses. As from the previous theme, this theme also emerges as a barrier to women's access to higher education. We also know this fact from previous research and past events show that the security risks are an obstacle to women's access to higher education and that Pakistani society is male dominant and considered safe for men but women are not safe. Another participant P5 expresses her views as follows:

In our country gender stereotype is prominent. Sometimes it gets worse. Obstacles are different kinds like sometimes traveling alone if I have to go somewhere where I have to take my brother or father with me. As a male dominant person and they do not allow me to move alone and take decisions about my life and other matters like education, marriage, dressing. After my marriage, they give the charge of deciding on my future to my husband. In, our society women have to wait for their family man for going out for every purpose.

Research participant P5 directly said that there are many gender stereotypes in Pakistani society and they are different in different places. She believes that traveling alone is also a gender stereotype that a woman is not safe when she travel alone in Pakistan. Before marriage, it is her father and brother and after marriage, it is her husband who travel with her and they do not allow them to travel alone because they want to protect her from other men in the society. This is the thinking of male members and even the females feels them safe when they travel with male member of her family. Women can travel alone but it is forbidden in Pakistani culture and if they do so in any circumstances they criticized badly that should wait for the men of her family.

Another participant's P9 views on security issues:

The only obstacle I faced to getting my higher education in case of choosing my higher education institute. My parents do not want to send me far away from my house due to security reasons and the cases and news come in our society the cases of harassment and physical

abuse. My parents are scared of sending me alone due to cases related to violence and harassment. They think an alone girl will be easily victimized and it is difficult for any girl to save herself in such situations.

Traveling alone is an obstacle, but most female students overcome this problem by choosing universities and educational institutions that are close to their homes, as they do not want to interrupt their studies. Another factor is that they do not want to burden their parents financially because traveling is expensive. Pakistani society is structured in such a way that it is not safe for women to travel alone, but they are safe if they travel with a male family member. In Pakistani society, the power of the male is seen as a protective role when he protects the female family member and gives her security while she travels to the educational institution. Here, male power as a gender relation plays a positive role in women's access to higher education. But male power is also a threat because men protecting women of his family from other male members of the society. Travel and security risk is barriers to women's access to higher education, and women in Pakistan encounter this gender stereotype on their path to higher education. Pakistan is an agricultural country and the proportion of the population is highest in rural areas. Most colleges and universities are located in the urban areas of Pakistan, making travel a major barrier for rural women to access higher education in Pakistan. The next topic of my research is what factors interfere with rural and urban women accessing higher education. The participants in my study are from urban areas of Pakistan, but they say that it is still a problem for them because their parents and relatives are from rural areas of Pakistan and they are not educated enough to allow women to access higher education. Some of their parents did not have good educational experiences and they are afraid that their relatives will criticize them if they give freedom to their daughters and send them for higher education.

#### 4.5. Rural-Urban divide

The overall educational attainment in the urban areas is more than in the rural areas of Pakistan. The difference in the rural-urban area divide is due to the surrounding environment, educational opportunities, the infrastructure of educational institutes, and the availability of educational facilities. People living in rural areas are not well educated and aware of modern technologies so they are not in favor of higher education and especially regarding women's higher education. As urban areas are advanced in terms of the surrounding environment, educational opportunities, the infrastructure of educational institutes, and the availability of educational facilities but still the women of the urban areas are facing obstacles regarding their access to higher education. Although some of them overcome these and pursue higher education. Therefore, women in urban areas are more educated as compared to rural areas of Pakistan.

The participants of my research study belong to the urban area of Pakistan. They are higher education students and one of the interview questions was related to their family background. How educated their parents are and what is their education experience?

One of the research participants, P5 expresses her views:

Now that we live in the city, access to higher education is not a big issue for me. However, it is problem for my parents because my mother is from a rural area in Pakistan and her educational experience was not good my relatives who live in rural areas also do not send their daughters for higher education.

According to the research participant, P5 views the surrounding environment as also a big factor in women's access to higher education. As the people living in urban areas are aware of the benefits of women's higher education and surrounded by educational institutes. So most of them they allowed and send their daughters for higher education. The belonging of a women to an urban area is an enabling factor for women's higher education as they face challenges and obstacles on the way to higher education on a small scale as compared to rural women.

Another research participant, P8 thinks that:

My parents are not well educated as they belong to rural areas, schools and colleges are far and traveling, and security is a barrier to their access to education. However, they want their daughter highly educated because now they are living in urban areas and there are many universities and colleges. The transport system is good and has fewer security risks. Their parents moved to urban areas to provide their children with a safe and healthy education environment where their girls can also access higher education.

This theme emerges from the participants' views that most people living in urban areas support women's higher education. They believe that a woman who is educated can support her family financially and bring up her children well. However, there are some areas, especially in rural areas, that are against women's education because they think it is a waste of time and money. As women are only supposed to take care of the family and home, they think due to cultural norms and distance from educational institutions, travel is a big problem in rural areas, and it is not considered safe for women to travel alone. If I interpret the urban-rural divide in women's access to higher education through Bronfenbrenner's exosystem, which relates that the environment and community services, institutions, and mass media play an important role in women's access to higher education. This allows me to say that, As these factors are more prominent in urban areas, women's enrolment and people's perceptions of women's higher education are broader and more positive in urban areas of Pakistan. As these are the challenges for women in rural areas.

## 4.6. Role of Government and Education Institutes

The participants of my research also highlight the role of the government and their educational institutes concerning Pakistani women to access higher education.

One of the research participants P6 responded:

The government raised the standard of the education system with more flexibility concerning women's access to higher education. Like they fund and give educational scholarships to enroll Pakistani women in higher education.

The responses I received on the role of government in women's access to education showed that Pakistan's education system has strengths and is working to promote women's access to higher education. We need to focus more on the factors that promote women's education. Government support Pakistani women in the form of educational scholarships that release the financial burden on their parents so that they get higher education in a healthy environment.

Another participant, P2, expressed her views on the role of government:

Government should put greater emphasis on the programs and skill development courses for women to get better opportunities for empowerment and take part in the progress and economic development of their country in a positive way.

When Pakistani women get better career opportunities after accessing higher education, they promote a healthier and more progressive society where there are fewer challenges and obstacles for the next generation, and they also help them change the mentality of Pakistani society. This is a very big goal and seems difficult, but their small efforts with government support are bringing change on a larger scale.

P1 Participants' views on educational institutes and policies are:

Our school's colleges do not have much independence to provide different courses. They have restrictions by the government as per the laws and rules. If the government allows free services to students then many women can obtain an education. In this case, the government has to take steps. Schools College should be free for access to relevant courses.

One of the responses from P7 research participant regarding the questions on educational institute support:

My school college always was supportive, competitions were held according to flexible daytime for female students. Sports and other activities are held under the buildings.... Therefore, female students can easily participate in and attend those events.

The responses from the participants, P1 and P7 is in line with an aspect of the microsystem Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System (1979). In the microsystem, they state that educational institutes

influence and have directly affected any individual development. According to the above statement of the research participant, her educational institute is supportive of women and facilitates female students to plan educational events according to flexible timing so that each female participant can attend and be a part of this learning as well. So, Pakistani women overcome the hindrance regarding their access to higher education with the support and help of the government in terms of financial aid and scholarships given by the government. And the safe and healthy environment of an educational institute will also be a great help to overcome the hindrance to higher education. There are still many challenges and barriers worth addressing, but now that my research participants have reached a higher level of education, the question is how did they reach that level and what changes are they bringing about to further the goal of women's access to higher education?

#### **4.7. Enabling Factors that also help Pakistani women at higher education level to establish a positive social circle**

While interviewing the research participants regarding the enabling factors that help and motivate them for their higher education. I asked questions like: Which factors inside or outside of society motivate you for higher education? In addition, how has your social circle changed or expanded through your higher education? The purpose of the researcher asking these interview questions is to expand on the research participants' views of how they see their lives and social experiences being changed or affected. Now they are college students, they face challenges, obstacles, and stereotypes that occur as hardships in their path to education. Moreover, even after they get a higher education, they are still part of the same society and circle. On the other hand, they change their environment so that it transfers to the next generation and the next generation does not face such obstacles as they did on their educational path.

The response of participants, P4,P8 and P2 all are the same:

The factors like empowerment, being a role model to others support for family, independent decision making, social status, equal rights, and financial independence.

Their responses reflect that the Pakistani woman came to know the positive outcomes of education through her family and mass media, as it is more active in urban areas to promote women's access to higher education giving more opportunities through advertisements and enlightening the benefits society can get from an educated woman. Furthermore, when they said that the positive factors from the society motivate her in her educational journey her thoughts refer to the exosystem. This thing also reflects that when society motivates a woman to access higher education then she overcomes the hindrance for achieving her desired goals.

In addition, one more participant, P4, views how her social circle changed or expand through her higher education.

My social circle has changed a lot due to my higher education. I keep the company of educated, well-mannered people who have a positive approach to life. The people in my social circle can raise their voices against any social discrimination, injustice, and unlawful things and acts. They are broad-minded with a progressive approach toward life.

We can say about this through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System (1979). In the microsystem, they state that family, friends, educational institute influence individual thinking, and my participant think that she found good friends during her educational journey who change her thinking, and now she is more open-minded and progressive in her approach to life due to such peers. Therefore, with the help of higher education women can bring changes at micro level through her social circle which she formed during her higher education.

The enabling factors like being a role model to other females and what they convey to their next generation, which were mentioned by my research participants, are very good motivation and support for Pakistani women to get higher education. In addition, for getting these rights and status in society they get the courage when they see these factors bring a positive impact on their lives to tackle all the barriers and challenges that are in their way to accessing higher education and establish themselves as higher education students to achieve their desired goals.

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The primary goal of this study is to explore the factors that female higher education students identify as hindrances, how they overcome those obstacles and establish themselves in higher education and discuss which gender stereotypes women students in HE have encountered on their educational path. It has been noted that still, Pakistani women are facing many challenges regarding entering higher education but their motivation, desire to become successful, and independent play a very important role when they tackle barriers and challenges and successfully enter higher education. It has also been noted that the most important factor is the support of her parents and father who want their daughter to become highly educated and aware of their legal rights after marriage. The belief of fathers that daughters will enable to gain her own identity and respect in society after getting higher education. The role of the father is, hence a progressive part but also problematic factor in the daughter's access to higher education. This is in line with how fathers, as male members of society and due to the patriarchal system of Pakistani society, still have a great deal of influence over decisions about their daughters' lives, and the way a woman's male relatives are expected to protect her from other male members of society. In Pakistani society, a woman is considered safe within the circle of her close male relatives such as father, brother and husband and is protected by them from other men. Trusted unknown men or strangers report most cases of harassment and violence. This is problematic when the father restricts his daughter's access to higher education for security reasons and does not allow her to travel to obtain higher education, and when he does not take into account what his daughter wants to study and where she wants to obtain her higher education.

This research also shows that gender discrimination is still present in Pakistani society regarding the division of labor. However, an interesting paradox the role of father as an enabling factor in access to women higher education emerged in my research. This study contributes to the motivation of Pakistani women how to overcome the hindrances in the way to higher education and establish themselves as higher education students for the development of their families and country through their higher education. The themes of women's social and cultural subordination and the urban-rural divide address some of the obstacles women students face in their path to higher education. The themes of facilitating factors and the role of government and educational institutions in supporting women's education emerge, as do some of the obstacles.

The themes reported in this study are interconnected with Connell's framework on gender relations and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. The first theme, the father as head of the household, emerged during interviews with participants in my study: The father plays a very important role in a girl's life. In Connell's theory, the man as father and head of household controls the women in his family and uses his power to maintain discipline in the family. In my study, the role of the father is



an enabler who uses his power to educate his daughter.. Connell and Pearse (2014, p.72) describes this as follow:

The power of husbands over wives, and fathers over daughters, is an important aspect of the structure of gender. This is still an accepted idea in much of the world, even in modified forms such as the idea of the father as 'head of the household.

The father is part of the microsystem of the Bronfenbrenner theory. When the father encourages and supports his daughter, she feels more confident about achieving her goals, such as higher education. . Consistent with Bronfenbrenner's exosystem, the community in which a woman lives, her extended family, neighbors, and political system form an exosystem that influences women's access to higher education in Pakistan. And at the macro level, it is the cultural environment and social norms that treat women as subordinates and do not provide them with the same educational opportunities as men. Pakistani society only accepts the obedient and subordinate role of women. The third theme that explains the division of labor based on gender is related to the sexual division of labor of Connell's theory. Connell and Pearse (2014, p.73) describes this as follow:

In many societies and in many situations, certain tasks are performed by men and others are performed by women.

The gender division of labor is a barrier to access to higher education for Pakistani women and limits women's access to higher education. And in Pakistani society, there is a stereotype that a woman who obtains higher education and has a career cannot fulfill her other roles as a daughter, sister, and especially a mother responsible for caring for and raising her children and that children are more emotionally attached to their mothers.

Connell and Pearse (2014, p.77) describes this as follow:

Attachment to the young children to the business of women, especially mothers, while fathers as breadwinners are expected to be emotionally distant.

It is also related to the macrosystem that a culture's values treat women and influence their access to higher education in Pakistan. The issues of travel and security reasons, rural-urban divide, role of government and educational institutes also explain how the environment, community services and educational institutes play an important role in women's access to higher education in Pakistan. They are also related to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological System. In the microsystem, educational institutions are said to influence and have directly influenced the development of individuals. In Pakistan, most of the higher educational institutions are located in urban areas and the people living in urban areas have a positive attitude towards women's higher education, while the people living in rural areas who are far from higher educational institutions and also have to face travel and security risks to access women's education.

The last theme enabling factors that also help Pakistani women to establish a positive circle is also associated and interconnected with the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System (1979). In the

microsystem, they state that family, friends, educational institute influence individual behavior.

The interview method also helped me to get a detailed and close contact with my research participants and proved convenient and a good strategy to address my research questions and get more detailed information from the participants who successfully establish themselves as higher education students. The political movements working for women's access to higher education in Pakistan have the same goal: to promote and enable Pakistani women's access to higher education, but with different ideologies. Secular feminism emphasizes that women have the same rights as men and that they are not restricted by any law or society, so they cannot do this or restrict or control Pakistani women. Secular feminism cannot be satisfied with the importance of the father as an enabling factor for women's access to higher education. On the other hand, modern Islamic feminism advocates higher education for women and the contribution of Pakistani women to the progress of the country, but it also enforces that women do these within Islamic rules and boundaries. According to modern Islam feminism the role of the father and the power of the father as a male in content to women's higher education and its essential.

The voice of women who participate in this study is a message for others that there is a ray of hope suggesting that enabling factors like their father's support and their own will to get the higher education can open the way into higher education despite the cultural barriers and norms. And once they make their way into higher education the other doors of progress and opportunities they can open with the key of higher education. The research is limited because I only include women in higher education who have successfully established themselves in higher education, and not women who drop out and have not reached the level of higher education because obstacles and barriers stop their educational journey. Those issues and obstacles are not discussed in this research due to the short period of time and limited resources and difficult access to those women.

My research study contributes to knowledge of the factors that enable or hinder women's access to higher education in Pakistan and complements previous research on my topic. Most previous research has focused on the barriers and benefits of promoting women's access to higher education in Pakistan. My research includes the facilitating factors and the obstacles to women's access to higher education in Pakistan and the participants of my study are achieving higher levels of education, The study includes that, how they overcome these obstacles on the way to higher education and establish themselves as higher education students. It also appeared from the research that women's participation in higher education is in progress and the women in urban areas are contributing their part more effectively because in urban areas the hindrance and challenges are less because there are more educational institutes and opportunities for higher education.

It is hoped that in the future, the ratio of entering in higher education will increase and more Pakistani women will successfully enter into higher education. Moreover, if they can pursue their careers, and

hence play a vital role in the economic and social development of Pakistan, they can give a positive message around the globe that Pakistan is a safe country for women as well.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1. Interview Guide

### Opening Comments

Thank you for participating in my study. The purpose of my study is to explore the challenges that influence Pakistani women pursuing their higher education and find out which type of gender stereotypes are encountered by Pakistani women students in higher education on their educational path and how they handle those.

### Key areas of the interview

#### Introductory Questions from the participant

- Age?
- What is the area of your study?
- Why did you choose this area of study?
- Occupation (If doing some work for earning), income?
- Educational journey (From where did you get your primary and secondary education)?

#### Family Background

- Tell me about your family your parents and siblings' educational status, and How much educated they are?
- What is your parent's educational experience?
- How do your parents perceive higher education for women and their views about women's higher education?
- How did your parents and family handle the matters related to financial support for your educational matters or did they limit any financial support to pursue your higher education?
- Did you face any family opposition to pursuing your higher education?
- Did your family force you to get married instead of getting a higher education?
- How does your family support your educational journey?
- How do your parents perceive Islamization in education?
- Did your parents limit your freedom and to which extent?



### **Social or Community Norms**

- What are the cultural and social norms in your society related to the higher education of women?
- How do the social norms in your society limit women's access to higher education?
- How did you think that gender stereotypes limit women's access to education?
- Which type of challenges and obstacles do you face in pursuing your higher education?
- Are you allowed to travel alone to pursue your education and is it considered safe in your society that a woman can travel alone?
- Did you ever face cultural or religious restrictions to pursue higher education and to which extent and how did you handle those?

### **Educational Institutes support**

- How much support is given by your education institutes to support women's access to higher education?
- How do w an education institute contribute to reducing and conducting the challenges to women's access to higher education?
- What are your views about the co-education system is it safe for women or it is an obstacle to women's higher education?
- Which type of challenges did Pakistani women face in higher education?

### **Goals and Plans**

- Do you wish to continue your higher education and what are your goals after getting a higher education?
- Do you think you can change the beliefs and norms of your society to limit women's access to higher education by your educational status and to which extent?
- How many opportunities did you get in form of empowerment and appreciation after getting a higher education?
- How do you provide your contribution as an educated woman to your family, society, and country?

**Current educational situation**

- Are you satisfied with your present status in higher education?
- Which specific factor influence your present status in higher education?
- Which type of hindrance do you face in your current state of higher education?
- How do you handle the hindrance that you are facing right now in your higher education?

**Enabling Factors to make your pathway to higher education**

- Which factors inside or outside of society motivate you for higher education?
- How has your social circle changed or expanded through your higher education?

## Appendix 2 .Information about the research study

The following information is about the research study which is taking place at your university in different departments in the spring month of March 2022. I will collect my data through a contact in the department of English who is a very good friend of mine and willingly accept my offer to be a part of my education research. She take the responsibility of providing me with informed participants' email addresses and contact numbers for the sake of my research work.

My name is Saima Laiqat and I am a student of International Masters in Educational Research at the Department of Education and Special education, University of Gothenburg. I am writing a master thesis on the topic of **Challenges in women's access to higher education in Pakistan**. Participation is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time up until the time of publication of the thesis and will in that event be excluded from the study.

Interviews will be recorded and data that is collected will be kept safely. All those who participate in the study (female students) will be anonymized in any resulting publications and/or presentations, following guidelines set forth by the Swedish Research Council. Recorded material will be anonymized and digitalized before analysis. This data will be used solely for research purposes. Any other uses would require further consent from participants.

Your participation in the study will primarily consist of your regular activities and will therefore not affect instruction negatively. If you choose to be interviewed, care will be taken to ensure that the interview does not interfere with classes.

One advantage of participating in this study is that you will be contributing to the body of knowledge about this type of research, which I hope to learn more about. Results from the study will be presented in my master thesis and you will have the opportunity to read about the study's findings in my thesis. I hope that you have the opportunity to participate and that you might find the results of interest to you in your professional work and regarding women's higher education status.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at:

Saima Laiqat  
[saimalaiqat1@yahoo.com](mailto:saimalaiqat1@yahoo.com)

### Appendix 3. Consent Form

I have been informed about **Saima Laiqat** research study on **Challenges in women's access to higher education in Pakistan** and am willing to participate in this study.

Mark "Yes" and sign below if you are willing to participate in the study.

Mark "No" and sign below if you are not willing to participate in the study.

YES, I am willing to participate in the study \_\_\_\_\_

NO, I am not willing to participate in the study \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

City and date: \_\_\_\_\_