

# Boys Will Be Boys

## Outline:

### 1. Introduction

- Thesis statement: "Boys will be Boys," a phrase that is used on day-to-day basis, by everyone, to justify any act done by boys. No one is aware that this connotation is not only bad for females, but is as harmful for boys, as well. This gives the boys a ticket to justify their way of act in this patriarchal society; and has affected the people on several levels adversely.

### 2. Boys will be Boy - a consequence of patriarchy.

### 3. Impacts of the phrase on individual level:

#### A) On Boys:

- a. Development of dominant mindset.
- b. Nullifying the emotions.
- c. No sense of accountability.

B) On Girls:

- a. Development of pessimistic mindset.
- b. Association of self-worth with acceptance from society.
- c. Sense of self-criticism.

4. Impacts of the phrase on the family level:

- A) Hierarchical family structure.
- B) Celebrating boys at birth.
- C) Nurturing of evil instincts.
- D) Denying ancestral property to women.

5. Impacts of the phrase on societal level:

- A) Victims blaming by saying "Boys will be Boys".
- B) Acceptance of violence.
- C) Religious misconceptions.

6. Impacts of the phrase on National level:

- A) Patriarchal Politics.

- B) Economy is a male domain.
- C) Wage-Gap.

## 7. Conclusion.

"It is okay, he is a boy"; "It is what boys do", you should have been careful; "Why blame him? He is a boy"; "Boys are not supposed to cry"; "Boys are not supposed to be weak"; "Man-up"; These are the phrases that everyone hears on a daily basis. These are the excuses given by everyone to justify any acts done by the boys. No one is aware that this connotation is not only bad for girls, but it is as harmful for the boys. These excuses are the tickets for boys to do anything in this patriarchal society. This has affected the people on various levels adversely and the impacts are widespread in every domain.

This mindset constructs the dominant nature in boys, they learn to nullify their emotions, and don't hold themselves accountable for any bad. The connotation builds up pessimistic mindset in girls, they <sup>start to</sup> acknowledge themselves from the societal mirror, and tend to criticise themselves for anything that happens to them. This mindset has created a patriarchal hierarchical family structure that celebrates the birth of a male child, nurture the evil instincts of the boys, and denies property rights of women. It has created a society that victim blames the girls by saying Boys will be boys, has accepted the violence by boys/males against girls/females, and further justifies it with religious arguments, that are nothing but mere misconceptions. This mindset runs the entire nation through a vicious

cycle, and there is seen visible patriarchal politics, economical sector is seen as a male domain, the women even if they participate or give more, are still paid way less.

'Boys will be boys', it is the cornerstone behind the patriarchy; if we look over everything from a broader perspective. By justifying every action of boys, we enunciate the mindset that they can never do wrong, or even if they do wrong it is fine because they are boys. This not only creates a patriarchal society that demeans women for every action of boys, but carries away any accountability from the shoulder of boys. If the boy does anything wrong and is not behaving in a decent manner, questions are raised on the mother. If a boy assaults any girl, the first thing is asked about what was she wearing. By pointing out this

defect Colleen Clemens also highlights that it is bad for the boys themselves and it creates a toxic masculinity;

"The boys in our homes and classrooms deserve better, and we, as the adults in their lives, must work to dismantle the cultural messages and societal structures that promote toxic masculinity."

The patriarchy plays a key role to development a mindset in almost every boy that they are dominant. It is engraved in their minds that Men wear the pants, meaning that men run the society. With the superiority complex, comes a self that is inferior; in this case females. Females be they in a family, or as colleagues, are seen as weak and inferior by men. A daughter is considered weaker than a son, A mother is considered weaker than the father, A wife is considered

weaker than the husband, even a colleague that has same job or a higher post is still considered weaker than the man with same or lower post. Hence, the dominant traits are created by a society that associates boys with being strong and emotionless and this way justifies everything done by them.

"Men don't cry", these are the only consoling words that their society offers men. They are being told from the moment they are able to comprehend, that boys don't cry.

This builds a strong perpetual wall that surrounds their emotions, and make them numb towards them

with time. But how does a society expects from a person to be careful about the emotions of others, when he is being told that showing or feelings emotions are demeaning.

This association of emotions with weakness, always keeps the boys away from feeling them. This creates a fearless personality in them, where they believe that they are dominant, strong, and they can do anything, and it is their right.

On the other hand, this ideology develops a pessimistic mindset in girls. They believe themselves as inferiors in the society. From the time they are born, to the time they are married and then when they have kids; their existence has always been associated with a man. This consistent reminding never leaves a room for them to think about their own existence. Only if they were aware that this mindset is a mere social construct, then they might see themselves as individuals. "We cannot change what we are not aware of,



and once we are aware, we cannot help but change" (Sheryl Sandberg). Hence, the girls to get acceptance in society, believe them as pessimists in this patriarchal society.

The girls are always told to behave in a certain way, dress in a certain way, talk in a certain way, or even smile in a certain way; Or <sup>or</sup> what will the people say? This one sentence pushes almost every girl to mold themselves in a character that is accepted by the society. But, this has no end, it remains with a girl in every step of her life; from a color she wants to wear, to a career she wants to pursue, she first has to worry about the society and then later she might think of herself and her choice. The girls even if they have spent fourteen to sixteen years of

their lives studying to build a career for themselves, are forced to leave all behind to get accepted by her in-laws. Eighty percent of the Medical graduates are women (at present), and only 20 percent of them serve as doctors after their marriage, while the rest leave the field. (Vice Chancellor Dr. Khalid Masood Gondal, King Edward College Lahore). This indicates how girls keep their choices aside to get accepted by the people of society.

Not only do girls <sup>are</sup> always ~~the~~ after getting the recognition by the society, but if something goes wrong they are often tend to criticize themselves for it. Every thing is my fault, is what they stick by; even if they are being wronged. This self-critical personality is nurtured in them since they

develop the cognitive abilities. They are always being told "You should have been careful you are a girl."

This is the other side of the coin - boys will be boys. Not holding boys responsible for anything, and holding girls accountable for everything, are two rules that are preached and followed in this patriarchal society; and it is what makes girls self-critical about themselves.

This mindset not only creates individual personality traits but also play key role in the development of hierarchical family. Even today, almost all the families are run by men. They are considered "Man of the family", means caretaker of the family. The caretaker live by the rule of absolutism, and believes that all power relies in him.

The roles are assigned by him, to him as caretaker, to mother as

caregiver, to daughter as reflection of the mother, and to son as the junior caretaker, even if he is just five to six years old. The son learns the same traits from father and acts in same way when he has family, and this vicious cycle runs from generation to generation. This family structure was described in a Marxist view by Friedrich Engels; "The husband ~~set~~ represents the proletariat, and the wife represents the bourgeoisie."

Not only the families are run by men; <sup>even</sup> the joys of the families are associated with men.

The family with the seven boys is considered lucky, while, the family with the seven daughters is considered unlucky and is looked down upon. The women in the society ~~are~~ <sup>is</sup> asked to keep giving births unless she delivers a

boy; if she deems then she is psychologically abused, even by the people who are educated enough to know that it has nothing to do with her. The families are seen grieving upon the birth of a female child, and the birth of the boys are celebrated everywhere. This deems ends here, if sometimes upsets the father enough that he has become a father to a girl, that he often kills her. One such case was seen last year in Mianwali; a father shot his 6 days old infant because she was a girl (Geonews, 2022). This is only one example, many such incidents are seen on daily basis.

By celebrating the birth of boy, the family make him wear the crown, and feed his ego on daily basis by justifying his every emotionless act. This nurtures the

evil instincts within him. He believes that there is nothing that he can do wrong, even if he does, he knows that he will not be held accountable for his acts by his family or by society. If we look into the case of Noor Mugaddam, when the news came out, there were certain people whose ~~were~~ first question was; "What was she doing at his place?" and if we look into the entire case Zaheer Jaffer was supported by his family, friends and his workers in the heinous act. Highlighting the point (Afia Saleem, a senior journalist) said; "Who comprises the society? Obviously, your first circle of society are your parents, extended family, your friends, the people who work with you or for you. And if we look at how the events have unfolded (in the case of

Zaheer Jaffar), everyone in his circle enabled him to do what he did.

This is the perfect example of how a society (Family) nurtures the boy ~~with~~ and his evil instincts.

This is not confined to celebrating and associating happiness with boys, or feeding <sup>their</sup> egos, but extends towards the usurpation of rights of girls. Their education, health, nourishment, <sup>of boys</sup>, all are prioritized over the education, health and nourishment ~~over~~ of the girls.

The families look down upon girls in such a way, that they don't even believe they deserve rights in the inheritance. This practice has been so normalized that if girls try to demand their right, they are ridiculed, threatened and cut off completely. The girls are left with no back by their own families.

"In Pakistan, a large majority of women

is discriminated against and denied their rightful share in ancestral properties. As a muslim majority country, there are clear directives for the division of assets amongst heirs. Yet women are regularly denied their share." (Intisab Sahi, Denied Inheritance, 2021). This is how boys are enhanced in every step, while girls are graded down, even within their own families.

A number of these families makes a society, which is enucleated with the same mindset and misuses this notion of boys will be boys on a bigger level. Societies with the mindset that boys do things because they are boys always ends up blaming the girls. This can be understood by victim blaming seen after a women being raped. There are many cases of rape seen by society almost on



daily basis now. Whenever a case is highlighted of a woman being ~~snatched~~ <sup>raped</sup>, the society starts raising questions on the woman's character and starts victim blaming. 2020 Motorway incident, was one soul wrenching incident where a mother was raped right in front of her children; and the first statement by the authorities was; What was she doing there at night. This shows the level of victim blaming that runs in our society. Though these people are often seem blind when infants, bed-ridden patients, and corpse dugged out from graves get raped.

The lack of empathy is further reflects in the violence against women. Men are told that they hold authority over the women, so they can treat them how they like. This mindset

give rise to sadistic people who feel no wrong in beating, sexually assaulting, or killing women. Power concepts, absolute power concepts absolutely; this can be seen in a patriarchal society where the sword of power has been given ~~one~~ to men, who don't resist using it to murder the women. This can be further understood by looking into the cases of violence against women. Women are burned on the name of dowry, killed in the name of honor, beaten to prove the manhood of men, thrown acid at for denying and what not. Qandeel Baloch was murdered by her own brother in the name of honor. Sherman Obaid Chisoy's 'Saving Faces' highlights the prevalence of Acid Attack and the after effects as well. The men are often pushed by

the society for all of this. This is how they are trained, to become a man. This can also be seen on daily basis in the form of domestic violence. Women are beaten by the husbands for asking for money, for wearing certain dress, for not cooking well, and sometimes even just to take out the frustration because man (husband) is facing any failure in his life. Human Rights Commission of Pakistan showed the <sup>domestic</sup> violence statistics that almost 76% of the wives are being yelled at, 52% of the wives ~~have~~ have been slapped and 49% are pushed in their married lives.

This is how violent behavior is created, nurtured and appreciated by the society.

These are justified further by attaching religious beliefs to it. People are not properly educated

about their religion. Enthusiasm against any gender or race is not associated with any religion. Basic teachings of every religion talk about peace and justice. But society and culture overcomes religion in such a manner that it is not even gets noticed. By misinterpreting the religion, society forces everyone to believe that certain genders have superiority over certain genders. Women are burned alive, in the name of religious practice, alongside the corpse of her husband.

<sup>14</sup> We are using religion to succumb the underprivileged sections of society, like Jalibaan said, women are half men." (Half of a man, Nikhat Sultan, 2022). No religion preaches injustice or inequality, it is the society wrapped ~~around~~ in the cloak of religion that does this.

Societies represent a Nation.

The practices that run in a society are seen in the authorities. The authorities that run the nation are from the same society that preaches patriarchy; hence, is seen in the institutions as well. If the societal preachings are patriarchal its political, economical and all other institutions will be patriarchal; run by the men and for the men. In Pakistan, the same scenario is seen prevailing.

In terms of institutional gender disparity; Pakistan is on 95 from 156 countries in Politics, and on 135<sup>th</sup> spot from 156 in Economics.

(Global Gender Gap, 2022, UN Report).

With time the disparity is decreasing, but still there is a long road that is needed to be crossed. It is required from nations that they must involve

women side by side of men, if they want to see their nation prosper. "No nation can rise to the height of glory until you women are side by side with you." (Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah).

The nation that is run by patriarchy believes that boys/men are superior to women in all terms, hence this will reflect in all the fields as well. It is not a hidden fact that women are paid much less for the same job as men, just because they are women. It is believed that men are needed to pay more as they are responsible not only for themselves but for their families as well. And women are expected to be fine with being paid less because they are inferior to men. This

discrimination is the behind the dismantling of a nation's stability.

There is a 34% wage-gap between males and females working in same fields. (Global Wage Gap, International Labour Organization (ILO), 2019-22). Hence, women are seen marginalized even if they do same job, because men are men, they are superior, they run families, and it is okay if they act in anyway or <sup>are</sup> prioritized in anyway.

In conclusion, boys will be boys tautology is the justification for any good or bad a boy/man does. This constructs a certain superiority glittered personality in men that reflects through their actions towards themselves, towards their families, towards society or humanity as a whole. This creates an other pessimistic personality in a form of woman, who even if is

tortured by the superior, believes that it is meant to be like that, some women associate their strengths with the strengths of the men in the family, even if the men takes the strength out on them. This chain of acceptance of dominance and being okay with being a pessimist runs in the families, societies, national levels, and in every sphere of life and fills the society with inequality and injustice.

"You can get a man out of stone-age, but not stone-age out of man."

~ Abhijit Narayan.