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Topic: Societal Stereotypes rather than economic factors are barriers to female education

Outline

1- Introduction

1-1) Patriarchy as a precursor of the societal stereotypes

1-2) Legal framework for female education

Thesis Statement: Economic barriers emanated from the Societal Stereotypes; female education as an end to status quo

2- How Societal Stereotypes contain female education? (Thesis)

a) The cult of domesticity refrains women to acquire education

Case in Point : 54% of the females as unpaid domestic workers in Pakistan; only 13.5% accounts for labour workforce

(ILO, 2025)

b) Stereotypes related to female

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intelligence barred female education

Case in Point: Madam Marie Curie -

a first woman to get noble prize;

only women to get noble prize twice

c) Unsafe environment as a hurdle to female education

Cases in Point: 1- Pakistan ranks 148 out of 148 countries; overall score of 56.7%. (WEF, Global Gender Gap Index, 2025)

2- Alleged harassment case at Islamia University, Bahawalpur

d) Wrong interpretation of religion barred female education

Case in Point 1: The murder attempt of Malala Yousafzai

Case in Point 2: The Plight of women in Afghanistan

3- How Economic factors barred female education? (Anti-Thesis)

a) Structural violence barred female education to supply cheap domestic labour for "haves" and "haves not"

Case in Point: A minor ^{household} girl

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found dead in Khairpur, Sindh

b) People tend to invest in male education due to less economic opportunities for women

Case in Point: Pakistan ranks

147/148 in Economic participation
and Opportunity for women
(WEF, Global Gender Gap Index,
2025)

~~c) WFemale~~

c) Female education is accompanied
by travel expenses under
male supervision

Case in Point: 43% of female
dropouts in Sindh due to the
absence of transportation (UNICEF)

d) Overall less spending on female
education by the State

Cases in Point: 1. Commulative
expenditure on education; 0.8%
of GDP 2. Male and female
literacy rate p. disparity in Pakistan
(Economic Survey of Pakistan
2024-2025)

4- Economic factors stemmed from

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Societal Stereotypes barred female Education (Synthesis)

a) Female education is perceived as a threat to patriarchy

Case in Point: Pakistan ranks 137/148 in "Educational Attainment for women

(WEF, Global Gender Gap Index, 2025)

b) Capitalism exploited ^{uneducated} female workers under the shade of feudalism to earn maximum profits

Case in Point: Inhumane working conditions for women in Guatemala

c) Women in leadership roles frightens exclusionists

Case in Point: Kristalina

• Georgieva - A role model for females

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d) Female education possessed the power to dismantle cultural hegemony

Case in Point: The concept of cultural hegemony by Antonio Gramsci and female education

5- Conclusion

Society as a sphere and economy as its institution; both barring female education

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"Give me an educated
mother and I shall
promise you a birth
of the civilized and
the educated nation"

Napoleon Bonaparte

Since the beginning of the mankind, women have worn their reproductive and caregiving functions like a crown on their heads. Women used to be the active decision makers in the early matriarchal societies. However, after the advent of the agrarian societies and transition into patriarchal societies, women have been deprived of their fundamental rights of liberty, equality, and education. The societal stereotypes along with economic factors, have been the barriers to the female education. However, the economic factors are emanated from the societal stereotypes, associated to the women. The matter of the fact is, the Socio-economic structures are afraid of the educated women because of

their capability to dismantle the unjust socio-economic structures.

Therefore, female education is considered necessary in all legal frameworks at national and international level.

The **Article 2 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)**

states that there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex.

Similarly, the **Article 25-A of The Constitution of Pakistan (1973)**,

guarantees free and compulsory education to all the children aged between 5 to 16, irrespective of their sex.

Despite the presence of the legal framework, the female education is still a pipedream mainly due to social stereotypes.

The first and foremost stereotype which is associated to the females, is their social standing.

The "cult of domesticity" - an idea which states that the women who show the attributes of piety, pretty and submissiveness, are the true pillars of the virtue. Therefore,

they should be confined to ^{their} homes, performing their domestic duties. This is the structural form of violence which abstrains the women from acquiring education. According to **The International Labour Organization** women accounts for only **13.5%** of the total labour workforce while **54%** of the females are unpaid domestic workers; with overwhelming domestic burden.

In many backward societies, women are still considered less intelligent than men. Women are deprived of ^{the} education because they are considered not good enough for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. These societies inculcate the sense of inferiority in women's minds and shun their desire to get education. Actually, these societies are ignorant enough to ignore the achievements of the women all around the world. Madame Marie Curie is the first woman to get noble prize for her work.

on radioactivity. She is the only woman to get two noble prizes in physics and chemistry; which is still a dream for many men.

Women are also deprived of education because of the unsafe environment outside their residential premises. The stereotyping of the women as "open treasures", become a barrier in their right to education.

According to the **Global Gender Gap Index (2025)**, Pakistan hits rock

bottom in terms of gender parity, with the ranking of **148** out of **148** countries and the overall score of **56.7%**. The women are

subjected to rapes, honor killings, forced marriages, kidnappings, and harassments, etc. Recently, a case of alleged harassment at **Islamia University of Bahawalpur**; sparked national outrage. These type of cases, inculcate a sense of fear in both the minds of females and their guardians.

Moreover, in the religiously

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driven societies, where the powerful classes interpret religion to establish their authority, women's education is barred by the wrong interpretation of the religion. The noble laureate **Malala Yousafzai** was shot dead in her head ^{by Taliban} for going to school. An injury to a 15 year old girl was celebrated in many cultures across the country. Similarly, girls in **Afghanistan** are prevented to acquire education mainly by the Taliban's interpretation of religion.

Although social stereotypes are the big hurdle in the way of female education but economic factors add insult to the injury. As women are considered as a cheap domestic labour, they are barred to acquire education. In lower income families, uneducated women complement the established gender roles i.e. home chores and child rearing. While for the higher income families, the same women worked as the

cheap labour force with no sense of security. In 2024, a minor ~~household~~ girl in **Khairpur, Sindh** was found dead after an alleged sexual assault. Thus, poverty is reinforced and exploited by depriving females from their right to education.

The people of low income countries rather tend to invest in male education owing to the less economic participation of the women in the country. According to the **Global Gender Gap Report (2025)**, Pakistan ranks **147th** in terms of female **Economic participation and opportunity**. Owing to their biological features and security concerns, employers prefer male workers over female counterparts. In developing countries, female education is considered as a liability due to the structural functionalism. The parents are more inclined to invest in female's dowry rather than in her education due to the ^{less} chances of recovering their investment in

education.

In regressive societies, women's education is accompanied by the expenses of travelling. A disproportionate difference between urban and rural development; compelled the women to either spend a hefty amount on travelling or to withdraw their education. Owing to the limited resources, women are generally tend towards the latter. According to the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**, one of the main reasons behind the increasing ^{school} dropouts, is the absence of effective transportation facilities for the girls. About 43% of the females in rural Sindh left their schools due to the magnificent distances and the lack of transportation.

In fact, when it comes to the female education; the State as a whole seems negligent. There have been very little spending on the female education. According to **The Economic Survey of Pakistan 2024-25**, the commulative amount spent by the

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federal government and the provinces, is about **0.8%** of the total Grand Domestic Product (GDP). No effective measures have taken to increase the female literacy rate. The literacy rate of Pakistan is about **60.6%** with female literacy rate of just **52.8%**, while male literacy rate is about **68%**. The ignorance of ^{the} government is also a great barrier to female education.

Although, both societal stereotypes and economic factors are the barriers to the female education. However, society being the powerful stakeholder and originator of the norms; is responsible for the restricted education of the women. Economy ^{itself} is a social institution. The economic constraints to ^{the} female education actually stemmed from the societal stereotypes. The ideas of "cult of domesticity" and "cheap domestic labour force" have barred women from their education as education is a threat to patriarchy. The equal

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education rights for all sexes may rewrite the gender roles. Pakistan ranks **137th** in **Educational Attainment** as stated in **Global Gender Gap Report of 2025**. The Supporters of the Status quo want women in a losing position in case of educational attainment.

In addition to this, female education is barred by the feudal lords and capitalist system. The women with skills and without education are the soft target of profit making industries. For instance, In **Guatemala**, highly skilled uneducated women worked in garment factories under hazardous working conditions. These women are subjected to inhumane working environment and are regularly checked to determine their physical strength. The entire process is extremely unhygienic and causes mental agony. In this way, capitalism exploits women without knowledge of their labour rights.

The Society reinforces stereotypes to contain women's integration in the managerial and leadership positions by keeping them from education. The female education is a threat to power and control relationships between men and women. The economic liberation of women through education may paves a way towards women in authority. The woman like **Kristalina Georgieva** - a bulgarian economist which is now serving as the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund; is a role model for women. The integration of women into in powerful leadership roles is changing the world; from male dominant into the pluralist Society.

Last but not the least,

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female education has the power to dismantle cultural hegemony.

"In order to attain power, seize the means of production and create a new consciousness through cultural hegemony"
(Antonio Gramsci)

As, the dominant sections of the society are tend to seize the resources; there ~~power~~ ^{power} for struggle for power does not end here. It generally accompanied by the taking over of culture, media, religion, and education. The female education helps the nations to oversee the things from a new perspective. It may lead to a world without political victimization, religious persecution, and vibrant culture.

To sum up, both societal stereotypes and economic factors are barring female's education. However, economic factors do not emanate out of the blue. Society is a predecessor to all the economic factors responsible for the ^{prevention of} female's education. As, society is a sphere

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and economy is its institution. The economic factors and societal stereotypes complement each other.

Owing to the presence of the powerful segments in the society; the battle for the limited resources is afraid to rewrite relationships between men and women. Men as the powerful segment, seize the resources and interpret power and agency. However, there is still a room for educated women in powerful positions to make inroads towards emancipation through education. Only this way, societal stereotypes and economic factors will stop barring the female's right to education.