



CAUSAL FACTOR BEHIND FEMALE DISCRIMINATION PRACTICES REGARDING PROPERTY INHERITANCE AT GLOBAL LEVEL: CASE OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Inheritance is the practice that refers to the passing of property to those who are entitled to succeed after the death of possessor and the successor can transmit it to another as his heir. The practice of inheritance is lined by different customs and traditions. Distribution of property is indicated as a major problem since the dawn of man because it can generate injustice or discrimination at the broader patterns. Present study was based on qualitative research which was conducted in Quetta city the capital of Baluchistan. The adopted sample method was purposive sampling and the sample size was 34, which included 20 in depth interviews, 2 focus group discussions (FGDs) consisted of 6 to 7 female members. In current study the researcher was concerned to know about the female discrimination practices regarding inheritance at global level special in Pakistan. Finding of the investigation revealed that women inheritance rights were discriminated due to backward cultural practices and illiteracy was the main reason of determining people's attitude plus denying women's share in legacy. Women who were disinherited faced prodigious social and economic hardships. In present study different themes were drawn from the collected data such as causes of female discrimination in inheritance from Quetta city of Pakistan, dowry as compensation for bequest, which had further sub-themes. Giving more preference to male in inheritance resulted in discriminatory practices against women. Existing study recommend that the state's prescribed rules and strategies should strongly support gender equity and implement the laws effectively, moreover they must guarantee that equal share in inheritance is given to men and women. Legislation should stop the practices and traditional laws that are against of women's rights and promote women education, because women empowerment play a vigorous role in the development of any society at global level specially in Pakistan.

KEYWORDS: Inheritance, Inheritance Rights, Gender discrimination, Property.



INTRODUCTION

The term “inheritance” is the practice of passing on titles, property rights and debts upon the death of an owner, or a right which a man has by decent and may transmit to another as his heir is known as inheritance. The concept of inheritance was developed centuries ago however getting change with the passage of time under the different traditions and customs, in some of the societies it is also demarcated as male ruled tradition of property possession in which women mostly heir less property to male. In the world every social group and human society has its own particular cultural practices, conducts and beliefs, in which some practice, are advantageous to all members, on the other hand some are not beneficial for vulnerable group of society, such as women. Since the dawn of man in matter of legacy women`s right exploitation is not an uncommon practice. In every social order women are combating for their rights, women rights to legacy not only repudiated in lower classes but also denied in elite classes and feudal system, Rejection of women`s right of inheritance is one of the most common cultural practice.

Different societies have their own practices and social norm of transmitting prosperity of deceased person to young generations, If a man dies and don't decide the distribution of his property, than it's the responsibility of the state to do it according to its set law. In Pakistan according to tribal customs, sons have the right to enjoy almost all the possessions left by their parents, though women usually do not receive their legal segment in inheritance. Even sometime women as sisters give up their share in favor of their brothers, their claims for share in property reduce their respect and can result in their abandonment by their parental side. Furthermore, Women are told that the gifts and dowry given to them by their brothers on their marriage and on different events are considered as their share in inheritance. In certain communities dowry is considered as the daughters' share in inheritance which is obviously not equal to legal inheritance in most of the cases, but women are bound to accept these practices, all these practices are mostly done to preserve inheritance.

In Pakistan typically man has a rheostat on power in most of the social groups. Women's rights in matters of property and inheritance are repudiated due to male value system, male are more dominated in every aspect of life. Even though Pakistan's state law and Islam both authorize



women to inherit portable and immovable property of their fathers but they hardly reward their rights. It is particularly practiced in rural Pakistan, where the tribal system and backward customs undermines inheritance rights of women, in several cases if women inherit property than it is customarily controlled by male members of family. In Islam there is an equal share for the male and female offspring of a late person, these limits are fixed by Allah; and the followers have been asked to follow it exactly. The Quran clearly says: "For men there is a share of what the parents and blood relatives has left, and for women is also a share of what the parents and kinfolks leave, it may little or abundant - a compulsory share." Surat Al Nisa'a (Chapter 4 verse 7).

Inequalities regarding inheritance are may continue by social institutions such as religion, family, education and political institutions, this inequality become the part of every generation. Conversely due to the traditional setting, diversity of laws and lack of management the women's right to inheritance is being denied, legal status of women is completely out of proportion to the men. In addition, most of decisions regarding property and inheritance claims are generally taken by men, ultimately claims are often decided on personal views and interests in favor of men rather than reliable lawful practices. The present study is carried out to know the gender based discrimination practices regarding inheritance and also analyzing the various factors promoting the gender discrimination.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Inheritance is defined as "a continuous or unending right which a man has to a property; it is a property or assets which a man has by ancestry as a heir, and he can transmit it to another as his heir" (Accurate and Reliable Dictionary, 2008). Distribution of property in developing countries is often indicated as a major industrial problem because it can generate injustice or inequality at the wider patterns. Inheritance is an essential fragment of the family life, and denying the right of a child of each gender from paternal property is the same as to weaken the family. Providing women's legal share in property can be a vital problem because of male dominated society even though laws repeatedly entitle a wife and a daughter to certain property after the decease of a husband or male relative.

Inheritance system in actuality become protective portion to save money through gender biasness. The present study is related to explore the



factors behind gender based discrimination practices regarding property inheritance in Quetta. The main focus of the research relies on finding out the factors of various natures that compel people to discriminate female in property ownership; that can be the male dominated tradition of ownership, great responsibilities of man, illiteracy, greed of family members, insufficient awareness of women about their rights and conservative practices of society. Women are always considered inferior to men by society in every sphere of life, which may distress their self-assurance and aptitude of defending their rights. The perception and attitude of society is being searched as to know the behavior of people towards women's right to legacy.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

General research objective

To study female discrimination practice regarding inheritance in Quetta

Specific research objective

To investigate the factors behind discriminating female from property inheritance

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Inheritance is a practice implemented by Islam and given equal rights to male and female equally but Female rights are forbidden, discriminated and maltreated then history, this discrimination and rejection of women right to inheritance has been a leading problem throughout history and generally. To diminish or eliminate these evils, the study will discover many aspects of women's life with and without inheritance. The research is anticipated to be the beneficial one towards resolution of discrimination issues against women regarding inheritance. The factors of female discrimination in property inheritance are being studied in the research which would certainly deliver awareness to female. Directing research on inheritance issues of female will point out so many new phases to the study, it would provide awareness to general people and female about this issue, they may stop discriminating women's right to inheritance. The present study as well expected to be helpful for many organizations and NGO's working for women's rights, furthermore it will open new settings for more researches.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Mathew, Susan (2011) found that an individual's attitude and perception is broadly influenced by his or her social cultural and economic context. Property rights of women is strongly ruled by cultural component. Thomas (1994) uncovered that women's rights related to inheritance, property and land are also effected by regular, religious and cultural rehearses. National laws of protecting women's rights are sometime undermine and influenced by customary laws which leads to discrimination against women. Moreover gender biasness exclude women from decision making with respect to property. Christian Morrisson, Johnnes P.Jutting (2005) revealed that social institutions are the most essential factors imposing limitations on women regarding property ownership and economic activities. Wang et al. (2012) found that men are usually considered as the heads and bread earners of the family, he has the total responsibility of his family therefore he own more property than female. Widows and women who marry out of the family are disadvantaged in this case. Niaz Mohammad (2011) in his study uncovered that women's share in inheritance is mostly denied because of economic and socio cultural motives and they face many obstacles while defending their property rights. Majority of deprived women have not sufficient awareness about their moral, religious and legal rights. Deere and Leon (2001) elucidated that while getting share in inheritance female face more hurdles than male. Due to gender inequality in property distribution and preference of men in inheritance practices women are at a great difficulty. Ward (2000) clarify that culture is a main aspect which determines the ownership of property and headship of family. In traditional societies men are usually considered as a head of family and being a head of family all property is automatically owned by male members of the family. According to Faustin Kalabamu (2006) in patriarchy system men are dominated over everything and have power to control women's rights of inheritance and status. Patriarchy is a fundamental reason of excluding women from property ownership. He further argued that decline in patriarchal system may possibly results in self-empowerment of women and their access to ownership of property. Carmen Diana, Jacqueline and Jennifer (2010) disclosed that women's less knowledge about their rights is not only a reason of violation of their inheritance rights but also they don't take advantage from the available property to them because of social norms. In case of ownership their property is usually control by husbands, brothers and fathers. According to



Lastarria-Cornhiel (1997) patrilineal control over inheritance and land is increasing due to different organizations and social institutions such as marriages, family, education and politics. Rights to land is owned by the male head of family or leaders of community, while poor women are detracted to claim for their ownership to land and in heritage. Eswara Reddy (1984) disclosed that belonging to lower position and rural women were found more vulnerable regarding their inheritance rights, due to lack of legal awareness about women's right women do not enjoy and claim for their share in property.

DOWRY AS COMPENSATION FOR INHERITANCE

In many conservative communities dowry is denoted as a compensation for women's share in inheritance. According to Mathew (1990) daughter and sons both are entitled for parental property and inheritance but usually girls are given some assists or dowry at the time of marriage and consider that dowry as their share in inheritance. According to Upadhya, C.B. (1990) there is a great relationship between dowry and female inheritance because it is believed by the inhabitants of South Asia that if women have given dowry at the time of marriage than she has no right to claim for her share in inheritance. Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) (2010) elucidated that dowry is accepted as a reimbursement for inheritance in Pakistan. Even though this impression is rejected by women but due to their family pressure, respect and customs they do not claim for inheritance. Their claim may meet them with hostility by their family members. All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) (2003) supported the fact that Muslim community girls said that dowry is their legal right but they should also give the share in their parental property but on the other hand Muslim parents give dowry to their daughters that further they don't claim for their share in inheritance. Rao and Rao (1980) observed that most of the respondents were not in favor of giving equal share to women in property. According to them women are given dowry at the time of marriage and it's their share in inheritance; while women demanded that daughter's should be given land as dowry.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Methodology refers to the theoretical and systematic examination of the methods applied to a field of study or a procedure by which the study is explained and described. It also referred to the methods by which



any phenomena is predicted and knowledge is gained about that particular phenomena. The chapter of methodology deals with the principles and methods that are adopted for the research. The study is purely qualitative, explanatory and descriptive method of social research, it focuses on the procedure of data assortment for the purpose of deliberating the causes of discriminating women's share in inheritance in Quetta city.

STUDY AREA

Universe is considered to be an area containing the total number of respondents that from where the data (relevant to the topic and objectives) to be collected through interview or questionnaire from a sample representing the whole. The universe selected for the study is Quetta city as inheritance practice and female discrimination practices regarding inheritances are found in all parts of Baluchistan province but present study is limited to Quetta city due to time and resource limitations. The study was carried out in various areas of Quetta. The areas were selected due to availability of respondents or sufferers of inheritance issues.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research covers a widespread philosophies and research techniques. In broad terms qualitative research examine the experiences of people broadly through applying different research techniques such as focus group discussions (FGDs), life histories or case studies, in-depth interviews, observation and content analysis. The study of "causal factors behind female discrimination practices regarding inheritance in Quetta city" can be analyzed more comprehensive through qualitative method. Hence, qualitative research method is selected to explain the factors which are playing vital role in discriminating women from inheritance in Quetta city.

SAMPLING

A slighter (representative) collection of elements from a population used to define the authenticities about the whole population is known as sampling. (Field, 2005). In case of unknown population selecting a sample size is a hard task. In present study this difficulty can't be overlooked because the total number of married female in Quetta isn't known. Quetta is a large city; from the entire city collection of data isn't possible due to time limitation and resources, therefore sampling technique



are a useful way which divide the entire population into segments and covers a widespread population easily.

SAMPLING UNIT AND SAMPLING SIZE

In the study the sample units are the female whose rights of inheritance may be discriminated, therefore the respondents were selected as keeping in view a common characteristic of being a female. The sample size is 34, which includes 20 in depth interviews, 2 focus group discussions (FGDs) consist of 6 to 7 female members. It provides comprehensive facts because it is purely based on qualitative method of research.

PURPOSIVE SAMPLING

In this type of sampling the respondents are selected by researcher's self-will and free choice, researcher choose the respondents which come across the purpose of the study. In this study the universe is anonymous, the definite number of total female resident of Quetta city can't be known fully, and so purposive sampling technique has been applied for this research.

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

During any research analysis collection of facts is known as data collection. Primary and secondary methods of data collection are used for research investigation. For fulfilling the purpose of data collection various research methods are employed to collect information through primary and secondary methods.

PRIMARY DATA

During any research inquiry the first time collected information or data from respondents is known as primary data. In present study primary data was collected through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and field observation.

SECONDARY DATA



For the purpose of an investigation collecting the facts and figures from already available sources is called secondary data. In the study systematic review of literature were conceded In order to find out the women rights of inheritance in Quetta. Numerous research articles, scholar articles, reports, newsletter, journals, official records, books, and newspapers were concerned for this purpose.

SEMI STRUCTURED QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW

Qualitative interviews are effective for a small number of respondents; it encourages the respondents to express their feelings and views freely in their own terms. This type of interviews can provide comparable and reliable qualitative data. The reason of conducting qualitative interview is to exhume the hidden factors that come across in the field (Silveman, 2013). In this research, 20 semi structured qualitative interviews were added to get comprehensive data from the respondents. Various facts about a specific issue and people are investigated through these interviews because of its openness.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

A focus group discussion is a process by which people from similar background and experience are gathered to discuss a particular topic of their concern. It is a form of qualitative researches which consist of a group of people from 6 to 12, are asked about their opinions, views, perception, beliefs and attitude towards a certain issue. Different questions are asked in a cooperative group setting where every participant has freedom to discuss a topic with other FGD members. Two Focus group discussions were conducted ranged up to 6 to 7 members in one group grounded on similar characteristics. The location and time of the discussion was selected with consensus of the contributors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Present section compacts with the drawn result from focus group discussions and semi structured interviews. Some basic facts are discovered by the scholar about female discrimination regarding inheritance. As it is known that female's rights in all over the world are discriminated and it has a negative impact on them, the researcher carried out his study particularly in Quetta city in order to know that

how female inheritance rights are discriminated and how women suffer from it.

Causes of female discrimination in inheritance

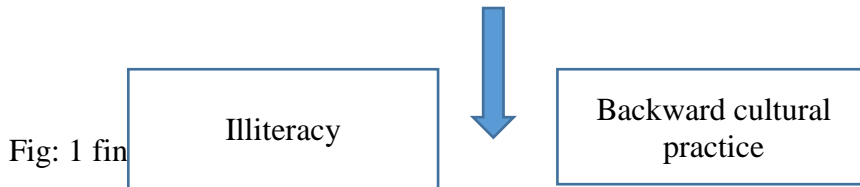


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The participants of interview guide and FGD were asked about the key factors of female discrimination practice with regard to inheritance, findings of the study show that several respondents were of the opinion that illiteracy and unawareness is the main reason of deprivation of women from her legal Islamic share. Educated female know their rights and in the case of rights denial they can concern to courts and other authorities whereas uneducated women cannot combat for their rights. The illiteracy or less education of female obviously lead to discernment in property inheritance by family members.

Table: Education of the sample respondents

<i>Education</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Illiterate</i>	3	15%
<i>Primary</i>	5	25%
<i>Middle</i>	2	10%
<i>High</i>	4	20%
<i>Secondary and above</i>	6	30%
<i>Total</i>	20	100%

Source: semi structured interview 2016.

Whereas Hari Nagaraja (2010) find out that there are many reasons due to which female don't claim for their rights and one of them is their education, he argued that in India most of the inheritance victims are uneducated. They feel fear for defending their inheritance rights, very few women go to the courts to claim for their share in property on the other



hand majority of female don't ask for their share because they don't know how to approach the court. On the other hand in the study of Niaz Mohammad (2011) he also highlighted the illiteracy and unawareness of women about her moral and legal rights. According to him majority of deprived women are either ignorant or illiterate due to which they don't claim for their rights. (Respondent from semi structured interview guide) said that *my parents distributed property equally among our siblings as our whole family is educated and they know female's rights*. In Pakistan even though female are educated but neither they ask for their share nor they contact to related courts for their rights because of retrograde values.

Whereas rest of the participants said that due to male dominancy and backward cultural practices women are not given their inheritance rights. One of the respondent shared her interpretations during discussion that *my brothers rejected our share from the property of my deceased father, in their opinion we (sisters) don't deserve it. According to them a deceased's entire property must be inherited by male successors, their perception is absolutely influenced by the expected standards*. It has been elevated from the above statement that men perception about female's right is regulated by our culture and they don't feel any need of giving women's share. Another respondent also declared the thinking of male about female's inheritance right she said that *we have told that as to believed that male have more responsibilities than women and he support his family financially therefore man is the only heir of the whole property*. Male have perception that they have all the responsibilities of household that's why they must be given entire estate of the departed one. The ownership of property is determined by culture and norms. Two of the respondents asserted that *due to limited awareness of the society whichever (male or female) women are prejudiced in property ownership*. From the above answer it is understood that our culture not only effect male but female's thinking is stimulated as well concerning inheritance. Question was asked to the respondents that why women do not demand for their inheritance right, one of the respondent shared her experience, she said that *I abandoned my share to gratify my brother and father, if I demand for my share my family might be annoyed from me and I don't want to lose them*. Some respondents emphasized that *one of the main reason for not demanding share in inheritance is that in our society even after marriage women depend over their brother and parents for everything*. The discriminatory practices occur from prevailing social customs and trends, the claim of share by female is measured as a dishonor for the entire community and family. To fortify our findings question



about women illiteracy was asked to the respondents, 75% of the respondents highlighted that in our society majority of the men and women are uneducated and they are not aware from their lawful rights. It was also emerged out from the opinion of the participant's that as compare to men women are unaware from the inheritance and succession laws, they don't have, means, info and self-assurance to attain their legalized rights. One of the respondent (member from focus group discussion) stated that *I gave my share to my brothers because they spent a huge amount in my marriage.*

The investigation of the reactions show that however patriarchal customs, perception of people, discriminatory laws, illiteracy and policies are the main reason of hindering women from availing their inheritance rights. Abby Morrow (2004) in his study claimed that transfer of inheritance is measured by tradition, customs and prevailing discriminatory laws which strongly denied female property right. Same opinions of the participants were observed in present study that, in order to respect the customary practices female are forced to don't ask for their rights and relinquish their title of property in favor of brothers.

The empirical findings of the study disclosed that discriminatory policies and legislation can be the motive of creating difficulties for women in procuring and pursuing their inheritance rights. 80% of the responses of the respondents in conducted research were same to the above statement. It has been cleared from the findings and different related literatures that there are different factors which are disturbing female legacy rights and eliminating them from acquiring their share.

CONCLUSION

Equal rights to property is the fundamental rights of women which are documented in international legislations as well, but unfortunately in our society inheritance practice is being influenced by patriarchal system and intolerant in nature. Due to cultural and usual norm women are disregarded from the legacy rights. Traditional practices, illiteracy and lack of awareness have made attainment of inheritance rights impossible for women. Laws are correspondingly responsible for female discrimination in inheritance because our country's prevailing laws are totally conflicting with practices and defined policies, consequently a comprehensive and complete line and methodology is required to bring reforms in policies and legislation that stop unequal treatment with



women. Disinheritance of female is supposed as a crucial problem by the activists, it may effect women's social and economic status. This study was designed to explore the perception of society towards female right to inheritance and to find out the factors that lead to female discrimination in inheritance. The findings of this study disclosed that illiteracy and unawareness is main reason of violating female legal rights, female right to inheritance is strongly denied by our backward traditions and male dominated society. Majority of respondents exposed that female with property share may feel more economic and social security, their position and status can develop by property ownership and they may be protected from psychological and physical violence in community. It was further observed that women with inheritance rights have the authority in family decision making and their economic empowerment promote societal development. To conclude the entire study it can be said that in the modern world women's legacy rights are still prejudiced in term of gender based practices which laid a women in a strong drawback.

SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Definite recommendations and pointers can be provided from the conclusion of this study for policy makers and legislation to promote and realize inheritance and property rights of women, and decrease domestic violence regarding inheritance. Current study has a great importance for women because this study may help them in getting their legal rights of inheritance.

1. The state's prescribed rules and strategies should strongly support gender equity and implement the laws effectively, moreover they must guarantee that equal share in inheritance and other commodities is given to men and women.
2. Issues regarding property ownership and inheritance should be deal by special courts in order to decrease its postponement and solve problems as soon as possible.
3. Inheritance laws should create such monitoring contrivances that facilitate women who claim for legacy. These mechanisms can be police units, NGOs or some special offices.
4. Monitoring system should be adopted by the courts to check out either their resolutions are implemented or according to their decisions female has given their property rights.
5. Legislation should give more authority to the civil laws and stop the practices and traditional laws that are against of women's rights.



6. Rights awareness campaigns should be run by legislation for educating urban and rural women about their rights.
7. Politicians and lawyers should discuss and make an agenda to ensure that women's are not to be deprived of inheritance rights, or enforced to transfer the property to brothers or husband's name.
8. In absence of inheritance women must go to the courts and claim for their rights without any fear.
9. From the findings, it has been cleared that women have lack of awareness concerning their inheritance rights. Therefore the most important and effective recommendation is related to the female education, education is most significant factor which help in reduction of gender discrimination regarding inheritance issues. Every individual either male or female should be educated in order to get awareness about human right especially women inheritance rights.
10. Dowry cannot compensate the inheritance, women should be given her legal share in inheritance, otherwise she should be given land or property at the time of marriage.(if parents can afford it)
11. There should be strict punishment for those who violate women's inheritance rights.
12. Laws should take action against those who marry their girls to Quran in order to prevent their property.
13. Women should take active part in family decision making that she provide inheritance rights to women and stop discrimination against female. In this way male dominancy can be reduced to some extent.
14. Legislation should forbid the third party who compel a successor to transfer or give up her share in their favor.
15. Laws should keep check and balance over the male members who become the supporters of a widow for their financial care after attaining her share. And there should be written agreement between an heir and a guarantor.
16. The message of Islam should be publicize by the religious scholars on the inheritance matters in a debatable and believable manner on the different events, for the establishment of women's shares people should be convinced.



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