



## **A Sociological Study of Education and Its Contribution to the Development of Gender Role Stereotypes among the Pakhtuns of Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

The concept of gender is a socio-cultural construction associated with males and females, while gender role is their performance in accordance with societal expectations. Similarly, stereotypes are beliefs based on predetermined notions about the abilities and performance of males and females. Different social and cultural factors influence the formation of gender and gender role stereotyping. In these, education plays a key role and mostly remains a policy concern among sociologists. This research study investigates the influence of education on the formation of gender and gender role stereotyping. The study was conducted at three purposively selected universities in Malakand Division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 24 participants, 8 from each of the following Universities: the University of Malakand, the University of Swat, and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sharningal. The collected data were then analyzed qualitatively, and the grounded facts were categorized under different themes. The study's findings indicate that gender role formation and associated stereotypes are developed and internalized by human beings through interactions and the influence of socio-cultural structures, including education. The findings indicate that since youngsters spend most of their time in educational institutions, where they learn how males and females should behave in different social situations. In this process, academic institutions — particularly the classroom environment, teaching materials or content, and teachers' differential or gender-specific roles — are more likely to contribute to the development of gender and gender roles and to inculcate associated stereotypes. The study recommends that a gender-balanced environment in educational institutions — especially in the classroom — teaching



gender-balanced materials or content, and a gender-sensitive role for teachers, could overcome the influence of these factors in developing gender role stereotyping.

## **Keywords**

Classroom environment, education, gender role development and stereotyping, interaction, socio-cultural structures, teachers' role, and teaching materials.

## **Introduction**

Gender is a socio-cultural construct, a set of patterns of behavior assigned to and expected of men and women in a particular society (Kruger, 1997). Every society assigns its individuals to different social positions or hierarchies, known as social statuses, and expects them to perform in an organized, patterned way, referred to as gender roles (Lindsey, 2010). Individuals in this type of role often limit their freedom and are bound to specific, predetermined duties and liabilities; existing notions and stereotypes primarily influence their roles. Stereotypes are predetermined notions or beliefs that are often used to judge a person, thing, or place without considering the facts or truth. Similarly, gender stereotypes are beliefs primarily applied to men and women, in which they are judged as fit or unfit to perform particular activities or choose specific professions (Agars, 2004). Stereotyping in sociological language is linked to biased judgment, which is characterized by inflexible, irrational conclusions about whole groups of people. In addition, gender stereotypes are strong beliefs about the traits of males and females that underpin specific gender roles (Suter, 2006).

Stereotypes categorize people based on characteristics they share, such as age, education, ethnicity, gender, language, race, and religion. These characteristics are then used to make generalizations (Bell, 2007). Research studies indicate that gender stereotypes are developed through gender-based socialization, learning, and communication across different socio-cultural contexts, where interaction and other socio-cultural factors play crucial roles (Lindsey, 2010; Sanders & Peterson, 1999; Leaper & Friedman, 2007). Among these factors, family and educational institutions are the primary sources of socialization (J. E. Jacobs, 1991), in which different tasks and social roles are assigned to girls and boys based on their sex-related or biological characteristics (Eccles, 1983; J. Jacobs, 2000).

Like family, education serves as a key socializing agency, providing an opportunity for the development of human personality. Education transmits knowledge, basic life skills, and cultural patterns to youngsters, which are then passed down from generation to generation. In educational institutions, youngsters are educated about norms and values and are equipped with the skills to respond positively to various challenging situations. These are the places where youngsters' personalities develop, and the experiences they gain in family and peer groups are organized.

Individuals come to educational institutions with internalized notions of masculinity and femininity and have the opportunity to change or strengthen their existing beliefs. Here, masculinity is measured by competitiveness, aggressiveness, and independence. In contrast, feminine stereotypic beliefs related to women are characterized by caring, altruistic, affective behavior in interpersonal relationships, child-friendliness, emotional expressiveness, sensitivity, empathy, and, above all, a submissive and passive nature (Ridgeway & Balkwell, 1997). Keeping this argument in mind, this research study aims to



investigate the role of education in promoting gender and gender role stereotypes in the Pakhtun society of Pakistan. The study primarily focuses on the role of educational institutions, the differential roles of teachers, the classroom environment, and the teaching or instructional materials used in such institutions in inculcating, reinforcing, and perpetuating gender socialization and gender differentiation, and, consequently, in developing gender role stereotypes.

## Statement of the Problem

Pakhtun society, in general and specifically in Pakistan, is mostly male-dominated and patriarchal, where different tasks or roles are assigned to individuals based on specific existing socio-cultural definitions and beliefs. These definitions are characterized by a set of patterned behaviors expected of men and women, or by the roles they perform based on their biology or physiology (Javaid, Omer, & Jabeen, 2012). The development of gender and associated stereotypical images regarding gender roles is common in different parts of society with varying degrees. Furthermore, these realities are not inherent but somewhat socially and culturally constructed through various social institutions, including the family and education.

Additionally, the development of gender and gender roles is also influenced by familial, educational, and relational factors. Of these, education plays a key role in the development and promotion of gender stereotypes. It is because children spend most of their time in educational institutions with the teachers who represent a patriarchal and gender sensitive society. They are taught in ways and with content that emphasize separate domains for masculinity and femininity, along with related stereotypes (Lindsey, 2010).

In Pakhtun society, educational institutions work under the influence of a patriarchal mindset as well as customs and traditions that are manifested in a way to give more space and opportunities to men. For instance, in many curricular and co-curricular activities, boys are given the chance to participate and express their strengths, while girls are often confined to more delicate activities. Similarly, key decisions related to academics and administration are typically made by male members of the institutions. In this way, the deep-rooted and historical normative order of the Pakhtuns is unconsciously used in these institutions, which restrict girls and mold their personalities accordingly. In this regard, this study aims to investigate the role of education in shaping, reinforcing, and perpetuating gender role stereotypes, and the impact of these stereotypes on gender role development in Pakhtun society.

## Methods and Procedures

This study uses qualitative research methods and relies on first-hand data collected from teachers and students of three public sector universities (University of Malakand, University of Swat, and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sharningal, Dir Upper) of Malakand Division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. In-depth interviews were conducted with 24 research participants, of whom 8 (2 male and 2 female students, and 2 male and 2 female teachers) were purposively selected from each University. The collected data has been analyzed thematically with a detailed discussion under each theme, and then a conclusion has been drawn.



## Results and Discussions

### Education and Gender Specificity

Gender is a socio-cultural construct associated with various roles, duties, restrictions, and experiences, and people act in multiple scenarios within a given society and culture. It categorizes human beings into males and females in line with the society's cultural norms and values. Institutions like the media, religion, and education are the ones that influence and construct gender, and provide a gender order that is firmly established in society and hardly challenged. Gender is then institutionalized as socially constructed, displayed through large social systems that include various responses, values, expectations, roles, and responsibilities allocated to individuals and groups based on gender (Johnson et al., 2007).

People are exposed to their gender at the earliest stage in the family and then further through informal and formal education. Education plays a key role in socializing individuals and imparting knowledge about their culture, traditions, customs, and other aspects of their way of life. Education enlightens children, young people, and adults and trains them to live happily and cope with future challenges (Wood, 2007). It is said that an individual learns about their culture through their family and the education they receive. Similarly, they acquire socially constructed, defined, and accepted meanings related to gender specificity, as transmitted by social institutions such as education, which project and perpetuate the culture's gendered ideology and perspectives.

The available literature and field data suggest a consolidated perspective, characterized by a stigmatized and constrained position for women's education. Data from the field indicate that participants in the majority support segregation in male and female education, with most asserting that male education is given priority over female education. Moreover, the respondents also indicated that women's education in the region is non-committal because there are no distinct female educational institutions. In some way, at the other end, some of the respondents believed that women are regarded as marginalized. Their education is viewed as useless and a stigma to the family's prestige. These facts indicate that the process of shaping gender stereotyping with the help of education is a carved-in fact that influences the future generation and its aspirations.

Moreover, most respondents believed that the Pakhtuns are not keen on educating females to some degree. It is due to the preconceived ideas they hold, and most of them see investing in female education as a waste of time. In addition, the field information suggests that, as opposed to positive transformations and gender balanced advances, the Pakistani educational system is not concerned with training students to play gender specific roles to a great degree. To this extent, some of the female respondents remarked that;

*In our educational institutions, we often observe that women are not explicitly educated to assume particular roles or pursue specific careers. Education to us (the women) is not a source of employment. Most of the time, neither do we nor can we work after education due to the worthless and stigmatized notion of the education of women and their work.*

Nevertheless, there is a shift in the contemporary educational system, where teachers and scholars continually work to ensure that education is gender-sensitive and gender-balanced. In this respect, policymakers and other concerned parties are guided, if not compelled, to devise gender-equal and



gender-friendly policies in education. With these initiatives, emphasis is placed on all learning institutions to deter the use of gendered academic practices, whether in the classroom or due to teachers' stereotypical tendencies.

### **Educational Institutions' Environment and Gender Stereotyping**

The responsibility for educating the people is vested in the socialization agents—the schools, colleges, and universities—which are both supreme and decadent. The most impactful one is the school where the teaching process is supposed to transcend boundaries of gender, class, caste, race, religion, and ethnicity. It can be a utopia for socially, morally, and technologically advanced nations; however, the same cannot be said of schools and other educational facilities in less developed regions. The climate of learning organizations, including but not limited to the efforts of the teachers, is deemed to add to prejudice and gender discrimination in underdeveloped or traditionally controlled countries, including Pakistan, and, in the current instance, the same activities can be witnessed daily in schools.

Similar to a family, a school socializes children and provides a platform for them to grow and develop their personalities. The school is the institution where the previous knowledge and cultural patterns are passed down to the new generation. As such, other schools are also institutions where children learn about culture, values, practices, traditions, and heritage, and are taught and prepared to undertake their further growth. These platforms are stronger and, in most cases, more difficult in a socialization sense, especially when a person finds themselves in an environment different from what they have experienced within the family and peer groups. A research study conducted in the same region posits that the majority of socially accepted meanings are conveyed and transmitted through social institutions, such as educational institutions, which proclaim, mirror, and sustain cultural perceptions of gender (Wood, 2007). The school is the primary and dominant institution of these institutions, and in them, the established cultural prescriptions of gender are reinforced, and as a result, the gender roles are specified and acquired in the same.

School plays a critical role in gender socialization because it not only inculcates what each sex is expected to behave in specific ways, but it also forms gender and gender roles identities that best suit either female or male (Wood, 2007). Educational institutions play a significant role in individuals' lives, particularly at earlier ages (Sales, Spjeldnes, and Koeshe, 2010). It is also observed that students spend most of their time in these institutions, where they learn about various aspects of their lives (Grafwallner, Fontaine, Torre, & Underhill, 2006). Similarly, many educational institutions reflect societal expectations for both males and females and teach them accordingly. Through this means, teachers continue to hold stereotypical ideas and images when teaching youngsters in classrooms. Also, the gender differentiation and gender roles image prevailing in society are reinforced in such educational institutions, where people study what their teachers preach and follow the example set by the teachers.

Taking into consideration the above facts and figures based on secondary data, the field information paints a bleak picture of the educational system, educational institutions, and the teacher's biased role. In this regard, the respondents were asked whether they were offered gender-balanced opportunities within the learning environments of their institutions. Most of the



respondents asserted that educational institutions in Pakistan, including those within the Pakhtun society, are not gender biased and discriminatory in delivering education and jobs. In all the institutions, both males and females have equal opportunities to education and jobs.

Nonetheless, the forecasting of such institutions in Pakhtun regions varies slightly in terms of education and job provision, as they are in close contact with local people and communities. Traditional Pakhtun-controlled areas (like those studied) are generally locally controlled and affected, and therefore guided by cultural values in their educational institutions. The field data indicate that, contrary to the prevailing trends, Pakhtuns attach relatively less emphasis to female education (respondents provided a remark in most cases), and even those who do emphasize female education argue that they do so in female educational institutions, not in co-educational institutions. In this regard, these institutions serve as amplifiers, socializing and educating males and females in accordance with masculine and feminine ideologies. In this regard, the majority of participants believe that male students are perceived as intelligent, active, and achievement-oriented when they are exposed to a male-dominated and supportive learning environment. Conversely, females, who are weak and relatively stupid, are not treated in the same way when they enter such institutions to have their education. Likewise, in the interview, the majority of participants remarked that male and female students are treated differently by teachers and in the classroom, where male students are given greater importance in certain activities, including questioning, classroom participation, and engaging in debates and seminars. On the contrary, female students are only motivated by activities they feel they can accomplish, such as drawing, painting, or other traditionally feminine activities.

## **Teachers' Role and Gender Stereotyping**

The stereotypes of gender existing in the research studies are more or less tied to the gender socialization and gender roles development within the schools where the effects are also seen in the difference in treatment of a teacher to boys and girls (Marland, 1983; Popenoe et al., 1998: 251; Palm-Forster, 2000: 55 and Gerlovich, Martin, and Sexton, 2002: 150). The teachers chastise the students who are caught committing gender-inappropriate behaviors, and on the same note, they desperately create gendered personalities and qualities in students (Fagot, 1977). Teachers sanction student, parent, and peer activities, thereby enhancing gender differentiation between boys and girls. There is also the likelihood that teachers spend more time with boys than with girls and engage them more often (Ebbeck, 1984; Morse & Handley, 1985). At the nursery school level and beyond, in most cases, boys are praised and criticized by teachers more than girls (Cherry, 1975; Simpson & Erikson, 1983). There is also the influence of gender on social sanctions. In this respect, boys tend to be rewarded for their academic achievement and punished for their rebellious activities. Instead, girls are complimented on their tidiness and meekness, and scolded for failing at school. This unbalanced exercise of social sanctions, which enhances self-efficacy rather than that of girls, is carried over into the school years (Eccles, 1987). The research studies also show that teachers present students with the impression that sex is a reasonable foundation for grouping people.

This typically occurs when students are assigned traditional masculine and feminine roles in schools, such as girls being expected to sweep the classroom.



Meanwhile, boys tend to perform more stereotypically masculine tasks, such as furniture transportation and classroom surveillance. In the majority of cases, teachers indicate they anticipate fewer girls in the academic realm and are likely to attribute academic failures among boys to social and motivational factors. In contrast, they attribute failures among girls to the inadequacy of ability (Dweck et al., 1978). Socialization in schools and educational centers manipulates the gender roles of students by teachers and educators, and these, in turn, impact their performance further. Considering the role of teachers, attention has been placed on the assignment of eradicating gender inequalities in primary and secondary education, as described in such major education goals as Education for All (EFA) -2005, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) -2015, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) -2030 (UNESCO, 2005).

The problem of stereotypes about gender in educational institutions and their manifestation, particularly in schools, is supported by teachers through the hidden curriculum. Indicatively, students arrive at school with minimal or no knowledge, and teachers, as agents, strive to inoculate the students and shape their attitudes and personalities in light of the high standards that define girlishness or boyishness (Marland, 1983: 1). The hidden and unintentional curriculum taught to students in school internalizes these stereotypical attitudes in students. This kind of curriculum functions via behavior and mannerism of the teacher and is in most cases unintentional implying that teachers do not always know about the presence of stereotypes that they impart on the students (Mosetse, 1998: 48). This is because in most situations, the students will consider their teachers as role models and tend to mimic whatever they say and do. The teachers also play a role by promoting traditional gender roles in their attitude and behavior, which students are expected to emulate according to their teachers' expectations. For example, educators tend to view girls as meek, peaceful, and obedient, and are more likely to conform to conventional girlish expectations and roles. This is highlighted by the fact that female students often see female teachers in subservient roles (Basow, 1992: 152), whereas male teachers are typically viewed as leaders, including sports coaches, principals, department heads, and coordinators (Mosetse, 1998).

The field data on the role of the teacher in generating gender stereotypes reveals that the majority of teachers dominate in teaching students according to the male and female classes. The teacher (particularly at the school level) is claimed to be paying attention to sex as a categorizing agent of human beings. When asked about the roles of teachers, most respondents said the only factor teachers use is sex characteristics when talking to their students. Teachers, based on the inner admiration they have of gender differences, were once led to believe that male students are not comparable to female students, as the data provided by the field indicates, which can be just observed and even measured in the prejudicial reactions and attitudes towards students expressed by teachers (as most of the interviewees indicated in their answers). Also, the field knowledge shows that the virtues of excelling in academics, hard work, being creative, and most importantly, working in male-dominated jobs are extolled, such as class patrol, leadership, and being accused of being delicate and compliant (snippets of the tapes of the recorded views of the female respondents in the majority).

Conversely, girls are admired for their poorer grades, quietness in the classroom, cooperativeness, lack of argumentativeness, delicacy, traditional womanly occupations such as sweeping and cleaning the room, and



submissiveness and compliance. They are, however, attacked for their hard work or activities that require energy. Within this relationship, the extracts from interviews with respondents are treated as evidence highly similar to that of respondents with the same employment status. In this respect, one respondent was able to give her opinion in the form of:

*... The significance of a teacher as an inspirer is vital for learning and a person's personality development. In my example as a teacher, my self-analysis of my personality, behavior, and attitude is similar to that of a school teacher. She (my teacher) apparently stands before my students. She is the one whom I used to imitate in terms of her teaching style, behavior, and her approach, which I think is how I learned (socialized) under my teacher. She would make a line between male and female students and demonstrate to us that the only basis of the divergence between males and females is sex differences. At school, we (the girls) were trained on how to be courteous, dainty, and timid. Instead, the boys were encouraged to provide high-quality services, including monitoring, managerial, creative, and leadership services. They were also branded as not accepting all job types, which are mostly of a superior nature. We (the girls) tried to rebel at times, took over, or shared the responsibility with males, whom we had been over-punished and stigmatized by. I was among those who headed the opposite camp, and would not be content to be reckoned as the tributary of boys; they desired equality. In this way, the teacher slapped me back, and was called to answer to my guardians, and to act like a woman. As long as I realize that a woman must be a woman, and now I am just another imitation of my teacher, my students will receive the same as they have been taught, and they (students) will teach what they have been taught. The circle of prejudices and stereotypes continues.*

According to field information, teachers play a significant role in gender socialization and gender differentiation, as they educate students in the manner in which they were educated. A teacher introduces some notions—images stereotyped according to the projected conception of males and females—applied in educational institutions, particularly in settings where education is used to treat boys and girls differently. Teachers have perceived male students as generally intelligent, hard-working, and achievement-oriented. Conversely, girls are perceived as relatively less intelligent, even frail and less diligent, among other things. As such, teachers focus on boys. Students are portrayed as having prejudices and biases, with a feeling of weakness, particularly in the academic arena, that is fostered in female students. Equally, the gender differentiation and gender role formation are intentional or unintentional roles played by teachers in projecting sex characteristics as a form of gender differentiation and assigning gender roles to specific roles. Making these facts known in the field, there is no doubt that the belief that there exists a difference and predetermined role of teachers within the educational institutions and classrooms generates gender stereotyping and influences the gender roles is justified. It is also noted that the role of teachers can be discussed as another source of theories, including social learning theory, which addresses teacher-learner differentiation, how learners



learn and imitate their best teachers, and the sense of encouragement and discouragement that teachers provide to learners. In addition to this, it also leads to the social role theory of sex differences and similarities, as it centers on the role of teachers in fostering gender stereotyping and the role this plays in future roles.

## **Classroom Environment and Gender Stereotyping**

Similar to other variables, a gender-equal and gender-biased classroom environment is also necessary for gender realization, socialization, and role-making. Students in learning institutions spend most of their useful time in the classroom; therefore, their personality development and academic performance are influenced by the classroom environment and setting. In this environment, students and teachers can connect and meet. Here, students imitate their teachers' routine activities. When it comes to gender stereotyping and role creation, the classroom setting cannot only influence the attitudes of students towards major social issues, including gender, but also influence how they see themselves and other individuals. To this end, Lee's (2008) study found that Korean immigrant girls did not think a woman could be President of the United States, and a classroom poster showed no women presidents. On the same note, teachers' role in the classroom is often underestimated in shaping how children form ideas about gender and its definition. Classroom educators and teachers, especially traditional caregivers, tend to praise girls for their dress, hairstyles, cleanliness, and helpful behavior, which can reinforce gender-stereotyped traits. Quite the contrary, boys tend to be proud of their power, physical abilities, stature, and school grades (Chick, Heilman-Houser, and Hunter, 2002). These teachers would also refer to the girls as 'honey' and 'sweetie' whenever mentioning them, but when referring to the other students in the school, would say things like 'you guys' (Chick, Heilman-Houser, and Hunter, 2002).

Teachers tend to unconsciously reinforce their preconceived notions in the classroom, which sometimes results in unjust stereotyping and, in many cases, discrimination. There are instances in which some also see girls of teachers as passive and thus more teachable than boys (Erden & Wolfgang, 2004). Equally, classroom management skills can focus on rewarding obedience rather than assertiveness, thereby disadvantaging highly active students. A teacher's atheism in the classroom can result in gender-fair, gender-congruent interactions between the teacher and students (Hyun, 2001). Moreover, when the classroom is stereotypical, male children are more likely to receive more attention from their teachers, which leads to a higher level of specific and instructive feedback (Erden & Wolfgang, 2004). Instead, females are less demanding of the attention the teacher pays, resulting in poorer achievement and lower self-esteem that, in turn, limit their career goals to more traditional, nurturing, and well-paid professions. At least in males, however, they do not absolve them of the gender prejudice, as they are left to live up to male stereotypes and receive less nurturing behavior (Zaman, 2007). Markedly, the presence of biased literature and curriculum that construct and propagate positive and negative stereotypes is also present among other classroom practices. Additionally, the fact that the teachers cannot teach them appropriately also affects their competencies (Ebach et al., 2009). Similarly, a study found that 80 percent of the teachers involved discouraged preschool girls from using computers to express their attitudes and feelings (McNair, Kirova-



Petrova, and Bhargava, 2001). Such stereotyping may lead young girls to fail to become effective technology users.

Additionally, they die away because it is the boys who are given more opportunities to be attentive in the classroom. After all, boys are granted the privilege of talking more, interrupting more as compared to girls, and it is because boys are perceived as independent and stable (Davidson & Gordon, 1979, p. 22; Lips, 1988: 238; Francis and Skeleton, 2001: 30-40; and Gerlovich et al., 2002: 152-53). The boys feel more confident, and the girls are powerless. Consequently, the girls will be more likely to develop low self-esteem, and yet, it will not be fair to claim that all girls will develop into people with low self-esteem because they are all exposed to the same treatment of being treated with sexism. In that respect, much of the literature research focuses on the most common forms of gender discrimination and gender stereotyping that are manifested in the academic setting. According to one study, the mean duration that the schoolgirls spent daily on non-schoolwork was 4.5 hours, and the same was 2.5 hours (Kane, 1996). It has been explained that girls tend to work outside of school, whereas boys do so during school. In a research study, it was also found that girls spend an average of 70 percent of their time doing household work, while boys spend 38 percent. Boys devote 41 percent of their time to playing and other leisure activities, compared with 13 percent for girls (Davison & Kanyuka, 1990). Moreover, analysis of classroom interaction and gender revealed that teachers are more concerned with boys than girls, and boys are acknowledged and accorded much attention in the classroom (Ohrn, 1993). Gender stereotyping taught boys to be appreciated and at ease taking risks, and girls that little was expected of them and they were not supposed to raise their voices in the classroom (Woolfolk, Winne, and Perry, 2006).

To correlate the literary data with the empirical data, one can reasonably infer that the classroom setting is a primary source of gender stereotypes. The researchers posed such questions regarding the perpetuation of gender stereotyping in the classroom setting. The majority of the respondents echoed the thought that in mixed-sex institutions and particularly in universities, the classroom is usually male-dominated, and teachers in such institutions are more and more oriented towards boys than girls. Additionally, when female students are encouraged by teachers in the classroom or given more time, the act is always perceived negatively by male and female students. Moreover, those with a high ratio (female students) presented contradictory arguments, claiming that males receive more attention in class because most assignments — such as organizing tours, arranging seminars and exhibitions, monitoring, and planning other activities — are assigned to males. Further, the language used in the classroom is also discriminatory and stereotypical (extracts from interviews with female students). Likewise, the interviewees' replies at most points suggest that, when communicating with the girl, the teacher commonly uses subtle, tender nicknames, including 'honey' and 'sweetie'. On the contrary, respectful expressions are also used in the form of 'miss' or 'madam,' etc. Instead, the respondents also asserted that most boys are called and appear like harsh amenities, indicating the teacher's trust and confidence in the boys and demonstrating the male gender's confidence and persistence. In addition, the entire classroom (male and female) is referred to as 'mankind,' 'guys,' 'boys,' etc., which also indicates the teacher's and the classroom's stereotyped attitude (as documented in most of the interviewees' statements).



It is important to note that by exposing students to stereotypical treatment, the researcher highlighted the impact of the classroom environment on students, especially female students, across selected universities. When asking about classroom setup and its possible facilitation of gender stereotyping, female respondents added that...

*This is not the open discrimination we (the females) have had to face in all our studies, not only by the teachers but also by our peers, the males. In some cases, we have also experienced discrimination against each other in school, both from our teachers and not our fault either. Although we (the girl students) are normally instigated and enticed by our teachers to study or at least participate in the curricular and co-curricular activities, as a result of the socio-cultural setup, as well as the predatory gender sensitivity and sex segregation, our teachers are not comfortable mingling with us in the presence of male students in the school. This is what we nourish because of the inner pressures of backbiting, stigmatization, and any labelling of us (the females) as the variables, and even being discriminated against by our teachers and the male counterparts. With time, we (the girls) internalize the process of such activities; this is why we consider ourselves the ignored part of the class (Responses of female interviewees No. 07, 09, 22, 23, 24, respectively).*

Therefore, the findings thus indicate that the classroom arrangement has an intensive role in the formation and disruption of gender stereotypes. It depends on the teacher and the classroom arrangement, which defines the children's personalities, depending on how they create a stereotypical or non-stereotypical model. In this connection, the data above show that the majority of responses relate to the school environment and educators' responses as the seed for the development of gender stereotypes. Finally, based on both the facts received as a result of secondary and field information analysis, the research assumption, which is confirmed to be accurate and realistic, is the following: a gender-biased and discriminative classroom environment promotes gender stereotyping and, thus, develops gender roles.

## **Conclusion**

This study concludes that the educational institution environment, in general, and, specifically, the role of teachers and the class environment, play a decisive role in socializing and educating youngsters about gender differences and binding them to specific gender roles in Pakhtun society. Since the concepts of gender and gender role differences are taught to children in the family to some extent, however, such concepts are internalized deeply in the minds of individuals through educational institutions. Youngsters spend most of their time in these institutions and are inspired by the teaching and role of their teachers. They closely observe teachers' responses to male and female students and how they assign different activities based on gender. The study found that many teachers approach their students differently, based on the notions and beliefs they have learned from their families, peers, and other relevant environments. In response, students make their teachers role models and learn from what they see and hear. In this way, the stereotypical educational



environment of institutions, classrooms, and differential treatment of teachers becomes the reason for developing gender and gender role stereotyping in Pakhtun society.

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