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Social exclusion**Corresponding Author:****Qudrat Ullah**Email: qudratsoc79@gmail.com**License:**

Abstract: *The current study aims to analyze the association of extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities (dependent variable) with social stigma (independent variable). The study was conducted in Kohat Division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A sample size of 370 respondents was proportionally allocated to each District of Kohat Division. To approach the respondents, social welfare Offices in the concerned districts i.e. Kohat, Hangu and Karak were also taken onboard. For interviewing deaf and dumb disabled respondents, 'senior oral instructors' were also hired for interpreting the response to different attributes of the questionnaire. The association of independent variable (social stigma) and dependent variable (extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities) were tested by using Chi-Square Statistics. This study was carried out in three districts of Kohat division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Pakistan. Nature of the respondents was physically challenged, deaf, dumb and dwarf. Whereas intellectually challenged or mentally retarded disabled persons were not considered appropriate by the researcher in term of their incapacitated response to the questions in interview schedule. The nature of the study was cross-sectional due to time constraints. The association of extent of social of women with disabilities was found significant with social stigma associated with the disability. The study concluded that women with disabilities are more prone to be socially excluded from the society merely on the basis of stigma attached with impairment. Raising awareness, convincing society to adapt socially allowable behavior towards women with disability, were some of the feasible policy recommendations made in order to counter the menace of social construction of disability.*

Introduction

The term disability or Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) whether men or women is generally used to describe the impairments, restrictions of physical movement, limited participation chances which in a consequence non-optimal interplay between the health conditions, some environmental factors and personal factors. Narrowly speaking, disability is actually cluster of complications and difficulties encountered in some areas of functioning i.e. the functional position of the body, active participation, and activities etc. (World Health Organization & World Bank, 2011).

Disability is an umbrella term for impairment, activity limitation, restricted social role or being unable to get the caliber of normal person. While looking from the narrow scope, disability can be viewed as physical inability (i.e. make it difficult to walk/run normally, use stairs), psychological incapacity and social negligence from the arena of society (Zarbigalehhamami & Kahraman, 2025). According to United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines disability is generally viewed as the outcome of interplay between those who are living with impairments and an environment around with physical, attitudinal, communication and social impediments (Amutabi, 2003). To show solidarity and stance with disabled WHIO and governments celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) on every 3rd December of the year. The day guarantees the sense of harmony and it is important opportunity to show solidarity with marginalized class. In fact, all of us have been experienced some form of impairments ranging from physical to intellectual. Presently speaking one billion of people which fifteen percent (15%) of the total population of the entire world are living with particular form of disability. Similarly, 80% of disabled persons in third world countries where access to primary health care have been denied and they lack to afford nutritional food to get intellectual and physical strength on the face of the said menace (Higgins et al. 2002).

Measuring Extent of Social Exclusion

To measure the extent of social exclusion Jehoel-Gijsbers and Vrooman (2007) developed a scale 'scale for measuring extent social exclusion'. The scale has four dimensions i.e. *material deprivation, lack of access to social rights, insufficiency of social participation* and *lack of cultural integration*. The first two dimensions (material deprivation and lack of access to social rights) are institutional in nature and benefits are expected to be received from public institutions. Whereas, the former two dimensions (social participation and cultural integration) are purely social in nature which pertain with societal treatment and its environment. In social exclusion scale, higher scores mean greater extent of social exclusion.

Table 1 The Dimensions of Social Exclusion Scale

Dimensions	Description
I- Material Deprivation	Lacking the strength in term of material entities, cash in hand, level of lifestyle, borrowing loan from others for sustenance etc.
II- Inadequate access to social rights/institutions	Waiting lists, social justice, social security, social support, employment agencies, healthcare, education, equality, importance, respect etc.
III- Insufficient social participation	Having no or limited ace to a network, social isolation, participation in social and leisure activities

IV- Insufficient cultural integration

Lacking prior integration with social norms and association to the rights of citizens, cultural duties, denial of performing civil duties, norms supporting marginalized groups like individuals with disabilities, cultural and social minorities.

Women with Disabilities

Research studies reveal that women with disabilities account for one-fifth of the global population. They face double deprivation of social exclusion than men due to conventional belief regarding their weak femininity. In war-torn regions and communities where civil wars frequently erupt in different episodes of time, women who are disabled lives are endangered and jeopardized (Pearce et al; 2016). They may confront challenges in approaching humanitarian assistance programmes due to greater risk of helplessness and violence than their non-disabled peers. Similarly, girls or women with disabilities are more prone to be exploited, discriminated, harassed in workforce environment and are vulnerable to all type of gender-based violence (GBV), in such situations they face bulk of difficulties to access support and services that could alleviate their insecurity and risk (Pearce, 2014).

Research Objectives

The following are the objectives of the study;

1. To ascertain the extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities.
2. To measure the association of social stigma and extent social exclusion of women with disabilities.

Literature Review

In most of the countries the disabled segment of society is repeatedly subject to unfair stigmatization from the larger society. False beliefs and assumption are attached that disabled the dull and cannot independently survive without the support of others. The religious and cultural beliefs also promotes stigmatization against the individuals living with impairments for instance in ancient time people attached assumption with disability that it is the devil spirit in individual who live with disability. People with disabilities are sometimes said to have certain traits, for example, to be filled with 'supernatural' qualities or to be given special 'gifts'. These too are discriminatory. Persistence stigmatization against women with disabilities can spread to all families, it has been evident on most of instances that children who intentionally or intentionally eaten the food of disabled family member was subject to be punished and warned to not eat that food so that the devil spirit of disability may not transfer to their bodies (Bond, 2017 & Tompkins, 1996).

These terms reflect the preferences of the ruling party, the views, and the appropriate definitions of what is common (Garland-Thomson, 1997). The Goffman's theory of stigma provides a clear proof that how and why disabled persons are always viewed as dirty and inept (Oliver, 1990; Titchkosky, 2003). His magnum opus contributions to this field are outstanding, help anyone to under the false assumption

socially associated with disability that how it makes worse the live of these people. The strong discourse from normal people against disabled is due to their privileged position in society whereas persons with disabilities irrespective of their gender identities are less privileged. So, the lash of stigma can easily harm them due to being socially less privileged. Goffman's works promote the understanding and awareness about the power of stigma that how it can very easily sabotages the identity of any marginalized class merely on the basis of particular trait. On the other hands he further deems that due to disabilities they are always viewed as deviant and parasitic who are unable to show compliance to the societal norms established by others as benchmarks for them (Garland-Thomson, 1997).

It has been noticed by the statistics that 15% of the world disabled persons experience social stigma, there are far-reaching consequences. Labeling or stigmatization results in the said community leads to their exclusion from education and wish to get a job, access to proper healthcare, full-fledged participation, enjoying all walks of social life with free will. Such maltreatment and stereotype against them certainly obstruct all exits and access to basic rights which eventually results in their miserable conditions. These consequences are very lethal for them to live with dignity and pride among others as they are deprived of defining themselves but conversely, others define them according their own priorities and biasedness. It is crystal clear the social stigmatization making a way swifter for the economic marginalization of women with disabilities. As women face double deprivation due to their disabilities and gender identity. Thus the risk of being sexually abused is very high and they are the easy target of expiring rapes as their physically paralyzed position does not help them to resist the rapists. Similarly, as compare men the disabled women are more subject to exclusion form social and economic sphere of society. Both at family and domestic level women with disabilities experience unfair treatment from the family member and are considered as burden on their shoulders. Disabled woman are more prone to be excluded and insulted by the family members than a man with impairment. It is their gender which makes them to be on very critical position to experience harsh attitude and persistent insult. These alarming conditions will progressively increase unless counter strategy is not adopted by the stakeholders to guard their dignity and sanity (WHO, 2011).

For members of stigmatized section of society i.e. the disabled, students with learning disabilities and stereotype often increase are most of times prevalent and may easily be found to be discriminated and subject to unfair treatment (Link & Phelan, 2006). The said marginalized segment of society experience extreme discrimination when they come to realized the gap between the perceived or expected attitude and actual on ground ultimately leads them to accept their low status due to the association of stigma (Link & Phelan, 2001).

As Shifrer (2016) points out, students with learning disabilities or health disabilities are at risk for each of the five aspects of social stigma. Social labeling theory has made it clear that endorsed *labels*, such as those provided for diagnostics and the process of identifying a special education for a person with a disability, have an impact on changing the personal and other perceptions of the people assigned to that label. Labeling has the negative effect of allowing the creation of *unfamiliar ideas* (Higgins et al., 2002; Link et al. 1989; Mehan et al. 1986, Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1996; Morrison & Cosden, 1997; Orenstein, 2000; Riddick, 2001).

Methodology

The present study is intended to be carried out in Kohat Division (District Kohat, Hangu and Karak) with the sole aim of determining the relationship between extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities and institutional inabilities and psycho-social dynamics. The present study was restricted to the aforementioned division respectively. The researcher adopted ‘Cross-Sectional’ or single-shot as study design due to time horizon. For knowing and digging social problems, feeling, experience or an issue, this study design is efficient in term of suitability.

As per report of Directorate of Social Welfare, Special Education and Women Empowerment Khyber Pakhtunkhwa total number of registered PWDs and who are also examined by Disability Assessment Board in Kohat Division is 22492 of which 9396 is the total population of women with disabilities from which resultantly a sample size of 370 was drawn and then randomly selected by using sample random sampling technique by incorporating technique as per criteria proposed by Sekeran (2003). The proportional allocation of sample size was also made to the all tehsils of the Kohat Division by using the equation proposed by Chaudhry (2009) as under;

$$n = \frac{N\hat{p}\hat{q}z^2}{\hat{p}\hat{q}z^2 + Ne^2 - e^2} \dots\dots\dots 3.1$$

For data analysis SPSS 20 version was used to run Chi-Square (χ^2) at Bivariate level.

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^r \sum_{j=1}^c \frac{(O_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}} \dots\dots\dots 3.2$$

Results and Discussions

Association between social stigma and extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities

The below table shows that significant association (P=0.037) was found between being disabled people treat in indecent manner and extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities. It has been precisely believed that social stigma is one of the leading agents of social exclusion. The exaggeration of ill-attributes in one’s personality cause serious harm social damage and low prestige in society. Social stigma brutally ruins lives of those who are living with physical and mental impairments. Women with disabilities with disabilities are denied by the society from issuing social passport to interact freely and get approval of living shamelessly. Darling (2003) also intimated that social stigma will have devastating consequences on man or woman's life, leading to massive harm in diverse approaches. Stigmatized persons with disabilities are frequently revels in feelings of shame, embarrassment, and worthlessness. The consequences are of serious effect when it pertains to women with disabilities as they are physically and psychologically fragile as compare men with impairments. Regular exposure to poor attitudes and prejudiced behavior can cause tension, despair, and different mental health troubles provide route to social exclusion of persons with disabilities (Edwards et al. 2017).

Moreover, significant association (P=0.055) was found between experience of stigmatization with disability and extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities. Persons with disabilities have had experienced social stigma due to their impairments. While experiencing stigmatization can harm social reputation and status of disabled persons which lead to their exclusion from normal social settings.

These findings are supported by Garland-Thomson (1997) that impact of social stigma is multi-dimensional, affecting intellectual, emotional, bodily, and social life of persons with disabilities. It may create significant limitations to access to public gatherings, avert possibilities, diminished lifestyles and cause social exclusion. The relationship of social stigma and exclusion is direct and are of serious magnitude. Preventing stigma and selling a greater inclusive and expertise society are critical steps to protective the honor and social well-being of individuals facing stigmatization. Supportive environments that mission stereotypes and foster empathy could make a big difference in lowering the harm resulting from social stigma associated with disability (Battalio et al. 2017).

Furthermore, a non-significant association ($P= 0.070$) was found between persons with impairments are always stigmatized by people in their surrounding and extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities. In traditional societies persons with disabilities are most often support by their relatives as they have joint family system which encourages care and support. These findings are in contrast with World Health Organization (2011) which reports that persons with disabilities whether men or women both are subject to stigmatization from people who live around them are part of their social life. Social stigma is often associated by those who are in relation or contact whether regular of causal with the status of people live with various kinds of disabilities (Feder et al. 2009).

In addition, significant association ($P= 0.055$) was found between disrespectful or guilty feeling due to status with disability and extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities. World Health Organization (2011) further emphasizes that it has been precisely observed that disability results in causing feeling of guilt and disrespectfulness among those who are living with it. The social exclusion of women with disabilities increases as they live with prolonged disabilities and feel indifferent while interacting or dealing with normal people. As long they live with disabilities the probability of social exclusion always alarming and devastating (Mizuno et al. 2016).

In addition, a highly significant association ($P= 0.000$) was found between behavior of parents is good with disabled son as compare their other children who are normal in all aspects and extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities. Parents who keep morality principles above all stratification done on the basis of social characteristics value provide equal love and care to their all children whether they are disabled or normal. These findings are in conversed relation with Milner et al. (2004) who thinks that actual and root cause of this stigmatization lies in family where some parent or elders do not provide love, sympathy, care and primary socialization to their disabled offering. Instead they disgrace him symbolically but sometimes verbally too with infamous mark of social stigma (Hofer, 2006).

Similarly, again highly significant association ($P= 0.000$) was found between indecent behavior of family members and extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities. While it varies in time and place as social norms and moral standard are not same across the diverse world. Conversely, Darling (2003) states that behavior of siblings is very offensive with their disabled family member due to his or her of disability. Most of the time family members do not allow woman sibling to get closer their social circle. They set some sort of limitations on him or her which ultimately results in social exclusion and negligence (Fletcher & Fletcher, 2005).

Furthermore, significant association ($P= 0.055$) was found between stigmatization causes feeling broken from inside and extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities. The targeted victim of stigmatization whether man or woman may experience emotions of disgrace, embracement, worthlessness, and humiliation. These findings are supported by Shifrer (2016) who articulates that strong and robust stigmatization results in intense and emotionally charged social ways of stigmatizing persons with disabilities based totally on a perceived distinction or deviation from societal norms. This

shape of stigmatization will have intense and damaging results at the person being centered, breaking them from the inside with the help of extreme prejudice (Fletcher & Scott, 2010).

However, a significant association ($P= 0.002$) was found between considering social stigma a threat and extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities. Social stigma is a serious threat and danger of causing stress, anxiety, depression, mental disorders and even Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Shifrer (2016) further explores that whether social stigma is a threat or challenge, it depends on the response of person who confronts it particular time. Those with fragile mindset and low self-esteem consider social stigma as serious threat rather a challenge to face are prone to be socially excluded due to their mental incapacities in dealing such situations courageously (Gooding et al. 2012).

Table No. 2 Association between social stigma and extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities

Independent Variable (Social Stigma)	Dependent Variable (Indexed)	Chi-Square (χ^2) Statistics & (P-Value)
Being disabled people treat you in indecent manner	Extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities	$\chi^2=4.328(0.037)$
You personally had/have been experiencing stigmatization because of your disability	Extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities	$\chi^2=3.675 (0.055)$
Persons with impairment are always stigmatized by the people around them	Extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities	$\chi^2=3.293 (0.070)$
You feel yourself as disrespectful and guilty due to your status with disability	Extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities	$\chi^2=3.695 (0.055)$
Your parents value like your brothers and sisters who are normal in all aspects	Extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities	$\chi^2=0.699(0.000)$
Your family members treat you decently/gently like others normal members of the family	Extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities	$\chi^2=3.699(0.000)$
Stigmatization makes you broken from inside	Extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities	$\chi^2=3.695(0.055)$
You consider social stigma as threat rather than a challenge	Extent of social exclusion of women with disabilities	$\chi^2=3.650(0.002)$

Conclusion

This research study made further inferences on the basis findings that the stigma being inept, inferior, maladroit, parasitic etc. associated with the disability of women was one of the prime reasons which

played significant role in shaping the worse identities of women ever experienced. This stigma not only contributes to their social exclusion but also influences how they perceive themselves. As a result, many women with disabilities may consciously or unconsciously internalize these harmful mindsets. The study showed that disability is both a biological and social construct. But as social construct, disability was seen more terrible consequences on the lives of persons with disabilities of any gender group. When it comes to women, then effects are more dreadful and lethal in a sense it forcefully drive them from the mainstream society.

Recommendations

- Convincing or persuading the members of society with ethical logic to stop stigmatization of marginalized segment of society particularly Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).
- Enabling active and conducive participation of women with disabilities at domestic and organizational level provides enough opportunities to turn blind eyes towards their disability.
- Enforcement of law through coordination with all stakeholders i.e. Government, Non-Profit Organizations (NGOs) working on disability, union of special persons, media etc. to discourage the bullying, harassment, mistreatment with women with disabilities.
- Arranging counseling or motivation sessions for the women with disabilities periodically to boost-up their level of self-esteem get realized the potential them have to be utilized with true zeal and zest.

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