

## PERCEPTION OF GENDER IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS OF GUJRANWALA DISTRICT

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### Abstract

Gender is a social construction. The concept varies from society to society, culture to culture and from individual to individual. In most societies, women are considered inferior, suppressive, sensitive, and men are considered superior, hard worker, and decision maker. Present study aims to highlight the gender attributes from the Rural and Urban societies of Gujranwala district. Data was collected through in-depth interviews from purposively selected eight respondents from rural area and eight respondents from urban area. Findings revealed that gender stereotypes still exist in Gujranwala, and they were found almost same in rural and urban areas. However, gender conception about other gender have significant differences. Females are still considered dependent, house ladies, suppressive, child caring and cooking duties. While males are considered dominate, independent, decision maker, responsible, job/business holders in our society.

**Keywords:** Gender Stereotypes, Rural Societies, Urban Societies, Gujranwala district, In-depth interviews

Gender is a social concept. It is often described as the combination of specific attributes and roles, which are expected to perform by an individual being a male or female. After the birth of a child, parents and society teach and inculcate that child about specific roles and attributes according to his sex. Sex is considered biological, on the other hand gender is sociological. Gender and sexuality that speak to sociological concerns and might be termed social

constructionist, historicism, and symbolic interactionism (Brickell, 2006). In this way, society play a key role in determining the actions and performances of a child through social construction of gender.

Gender roles' perceptions are socially constructed and varies from culture to culture, society to society and individual to individual (Lorber & Farrell, 1991). Femininity and masculinity or one's gender identity refers to the degree to which persons see themselves as masculine or feminine given what it means to be a man or woman in society. Femininity and masculinity are rooted in the social rather than the biological (Stets & Burke, 2009). Therefore, every culture and society has his own gender identities, reflections, perceptions, attributes, status and roles. Pakistani society has also its own distinct conceptions of gender. Therefore, present study aims to explore gender conceptions among Pakistan individuals.

In Pakistan, Khalid (2011) found gender roles perceptions found different among migrants and non-migrants of different backgrounds. According to Gallup Pkaistan (2009), in Pakistan, boys education is considered more important than girls. Moreover, boys are considered better politicians and girls are associated with children. However, both husband and wife should work for better married life. In our society, females are deprived of their share in family income, and it is a major hurdle in development and poverty alleviation (Alam, 2011). Khan and Sabir (1993) stated that education is the only significant variable which effect gender roles attitudes. On the other side, age, marital status, and occupation were not found significant variables. Aziz and Kamal (2012) Found significant difference in occupational aspirations of males and females as men aspired more for traditional men occupations and women aspired more for traditional women occupations than traditional men occupations. Due to significant effect of demographic

variables on gender conceptions, present study aims to highlight and compare gender conceptions among rural and urban individuals.

Societal factors impact both the individual and organization levels in perpetuating the existing stereotypes against both genders which ultimately harm the advancement of females in their careers especially in management (Mirza & Jabeen, 2011). Hussain, Habib, and Akhter (2014) indicated that rigid stereotypes have significant impact on females. And it is root cause of inequality between sexes in Pakistani society. It has bad effect on thinking, behaviors, values and customs of Pakistani society. Media and literature had play negative role in this regard. Eradication of these stereotypes is impossible. But these can be modified by giving awareness and education to people and by changing the pattern of socialization. In our society, women are often associated with child caring, house duties, beauty and emotional. While men are associated with decision making, job duties, leadership, tough and sensible. Present study also aims to find out ways for gender equality in Pakistani society.

### **Objectives of Study**

Followings are the major objectives of this study;

- To inquire the perception of gender in both male and females.
- To compare the gender conceptions of rural and urban individuals
- To compare the gender conceptions of male and females
- To find out ways for gender equality in society.

### **Research Questions**

Followings are the research questions of study.

**RQ1:** What are the major attributes which are associated with male and females in our society?

**RQ2:** What is the difference between gender conception of two groups male and females?

**RQ3:** To what extent, gender conceptions vary from rural to urban society?

### **Methodology**

Present study is exploratory in nature. Therefore, it used qualitative research design for achieving the research goals. In-depth interview method was employed to investigate gender perception among male and females of Gujranwala society. Four male respondents and four female respondents were interviewed from the rural area of Gujranwala. Four male respondents and four female respondents were interviewed from urban area of Gujranwala. Respondents were accessed personally. Proper permission was taken before starting interview. They were introduced about the topic, and they were granted right to withdraw from interview at any stage. Respondents were also ensured about confidentiality of information. After data collection, thematic analysis was performed.

### **Interview Protocol**

An interview protocol was developed. Firstly, questions about demographic detail of respondent were asked. Secondly, question items were designed. Questions were about; women conception, men conception, women roles, men roles, women qualities, men qualities, women social problems, men social problems, suggestions for gender equality (see Annexure – I).

### **Results**

After data collection, themes were derived from the answers of interviewees. Visualization software was used to visualize the image of man and woman in the minds of respondents (Table 1). Figure 1 & 2 show that there are no more significant differences among the gender conception of rural and urban people. However, urban individuals associated sincerity

and equality with both man and woman. On the other side, rural people associated equality and education with both man and woman. Woman are associated with the attributes of house duties, house wife, dependent, child caring, suppressive, loving,, caring, sincere, and loyal. On the other side, men are associated with responsibilities, job, business, decision maker, dominate, superior.

Table 1

*Thematic Analysis of Gender attribution by Rural & Urban Respondents*

Sample Category	Gender	Themes/Attributes
<b>Urban Respondents</b>		
	Man	Moral Character, Decision Maker, Dominate, Job holders, Businessman, Responsible, Superior, Sincere, Equal to Woman
	Woman	Loving, Ba-haya, Caring, Islamic Values, Dependent, Outdoor activities, House duties, Child caring, Cooking, House wife, Independent, Sincere, Equal to Man
<b>Rural Respondents</b>		
	Man	Responsible, Safeguard to family, Decision Maker, Hardworker, Job holders, Dominate, Educated, Equal to Woman
	Woman	Ba-haya, Loyal, Dependent, House duties, tolerance, cooking, compromise, House Wife, Suppressive, Educated, Equal to Man

Figure 3 & 4 reveals that woman also think themselves as housewife, child caring, house duties, suppressive, obedient, and dependent. While the perception of man respondents is significantly different. They think that woman are now independent, moving outside, man is hard worker, responsible for economic needs of family. They don't associated domination with man

and dependency with woman. In the figures, line size show the frequency of attribute. Darker the line; more the emphasize on that attribute for particular gender. Woman are associated with the attributes of house duties, house wife, dependent, child caring, suppressive, loving,, caring, sincere, and loyal. On the other side, men are associated with responsibilities, job, business, decision maker, dominate, superior.

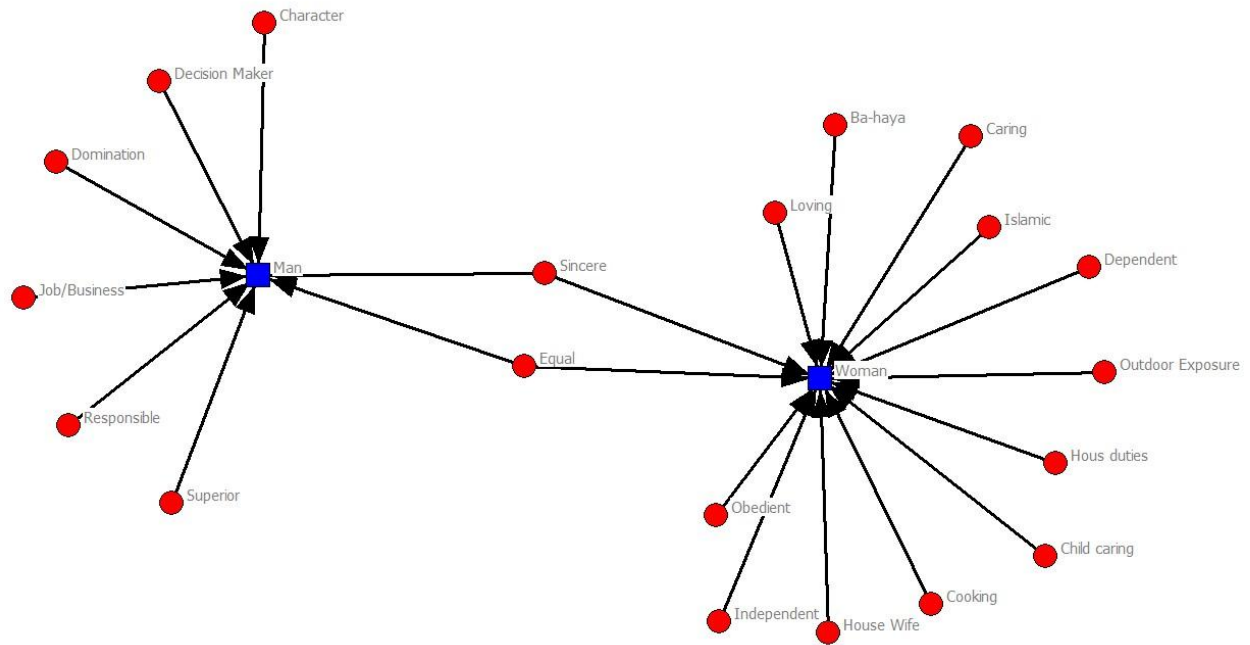
Table 2

*Thematic Analysis of Gender attribution by Male & Female Respondents*

Sample Category	Gender	Themes/Attributes
<b>Male Respondents</b>		
	Man	Business, Safeguard, Handworker, Job holder, Responsible, Superior, Equal to Woman, Independent, Moral Character
	Woman	Cooking, Sincere, Outdoor activities, House duties, educated, Child caring, Loyal, House wife, Equal to Woman, Independent, Moral Character
<b>Female Respondents</b>		
	Man	Decision Maker, Dominate, Educated, Superior, Responsible, Equal to Man, Sincere
	Woman	Suppressive, House duties, Child caring, Dependent, Compromise, Ba-haya, House wife, Equal to Man, Sincere

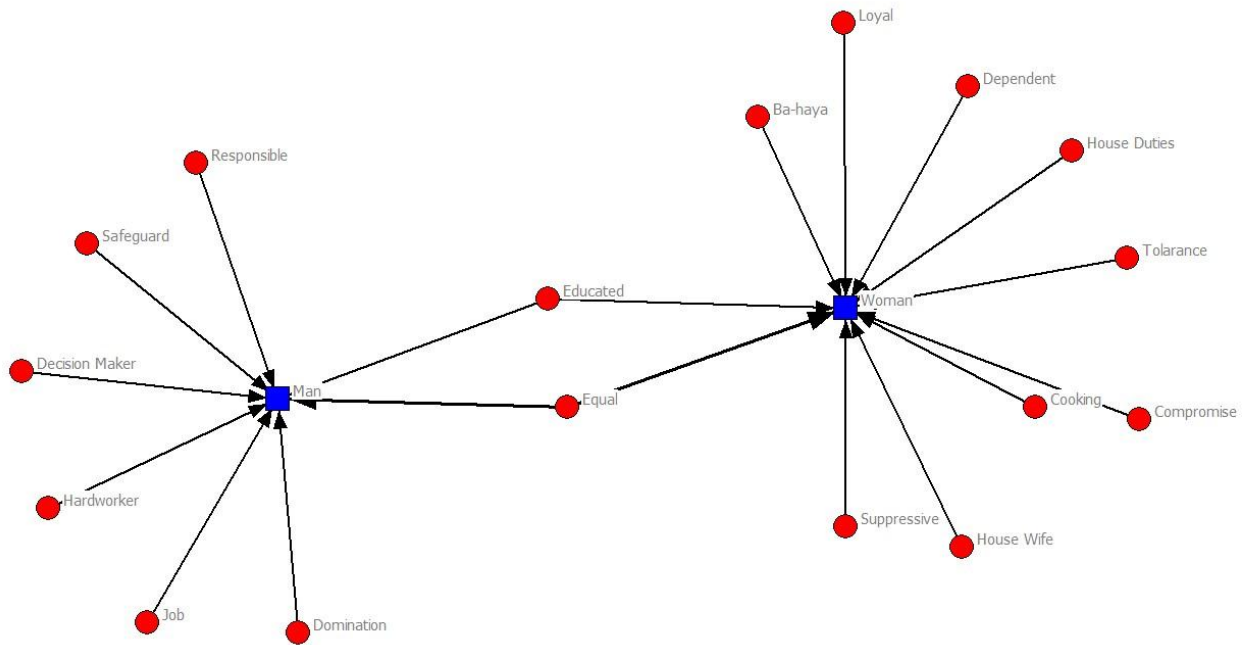
**Figure 1**

*Themes and attributes associated with Man & Woman by Urban People*



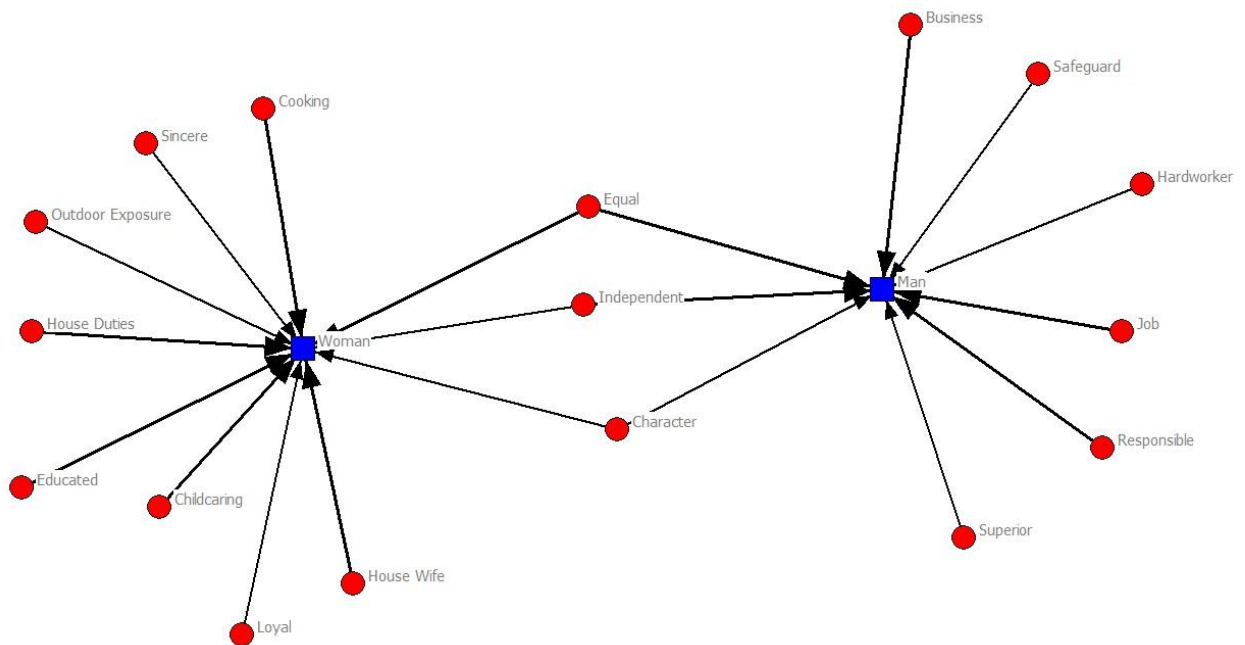
**Figure 2**

*Themes and attributes associated with Man & Woman by Rural People*



**Figure 3**

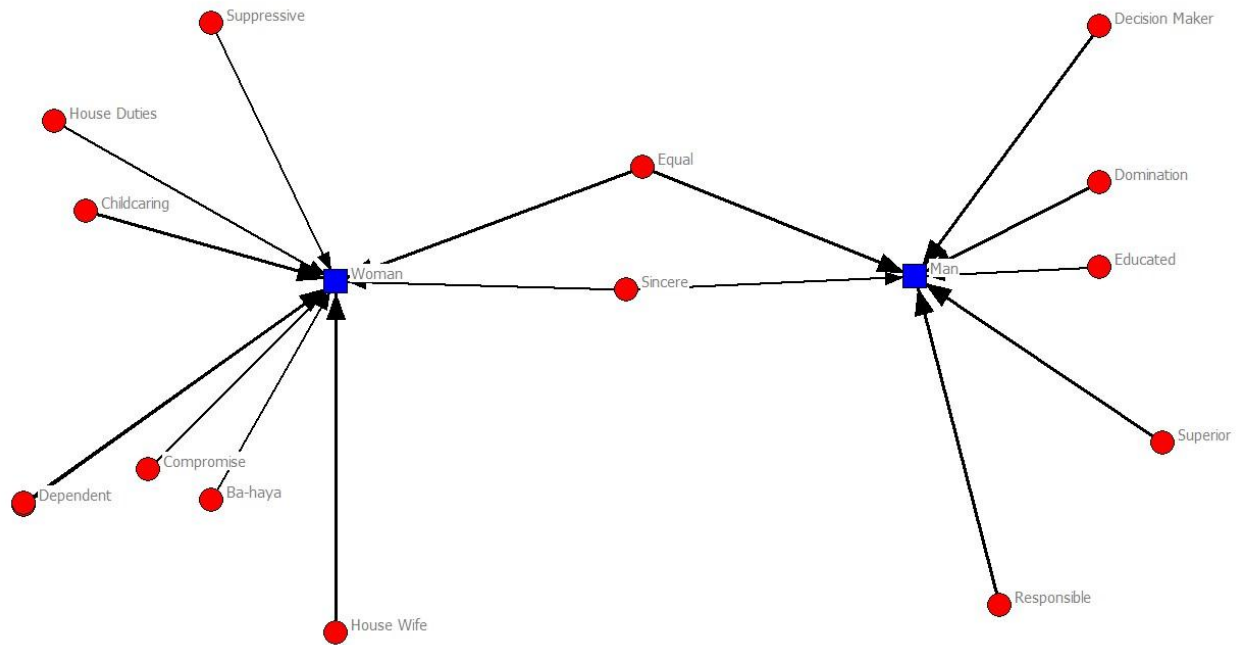
*Themes and attributes associated with Man & Woman by Men*



**Figure 4**

*Themes and attributes associated with Man & Woman by Women*





## Discussion

Present study was designed to measure and compare the gender conceptions of rural and urban society of Gujranwala. Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 find out that gender is social construction and gender perception varies from individual to individual, as it is assumed by scholars (Lorber & Farrell, 1991; Stets & Burke, 2009). Furthermore, study explored that there are no significant differences among the gender perception of rural and urban people. In this way, study adds in previous findings of Khan and Sabir (1993) that area is also not significant variable for gender conception in society of Gujranwala. These findings provides sufficient answer to RQ3.

As it is noted that gender stereotypes are rooted in Pakistan society (Aziz & Kamal, 2012; Hussain et al., 2014). Females are considered house wife, child caring, inferior to man, and man are considered decision maker, responsible (Gallup Pkaistan, 2009). This stereotyping causing suppression of woman, and restricting development of society (Mirza & Jabeen, 2011). Present study also found that these stereotypes also exists in Gujranwala society. Although, respondents

provide data that man and woman are equal, yet certain roles and attributes, such as child caring, house duties, dependent, loving, loyal, suppressive, ba-haya were only associated with woman. It is worth mentioning here, that Islam also demands from man to become sincere, loyal, caring, loving and ba-haya. But our society associates these attributes to only females. On the other hand, man are considered decision maker, responsible, job or business holders, safeguard of family and hard worker. All these findings provide answer of RQ1. It indicates, this stereotyping leads our society towards 'patriarchal society' which is not healthy indicator for development. There should be equality and equity among gender roles and duties according to the teachings of Islam and needs of society.

In order to answer the RQ2, an interesting thing, which was explored, is that the perception of a person towards other gender is significantly different. Woman respondents talk about dependency, suppression of woman and domination of man (Figure 4). While, man respondents think woman independent, educated and having free movement (Figure 3). This provides an insightful direction for future research, that there may exists hostile perception towards other gender. Gender equity and respect should be investigated for future research.

### **Conclusion**

It is concluded that gender stereotypes exists in Gujranwala, and they were found almost same in rural and urban areas. However, gender conception about other gender have significant differences. Females are still considered dependent, house ladies, suppressive, child caring and cooking duties. While males are considered dominate, independent, decision maker, responsible, job/business holders in our society. There is a need to formulate policy for promoting gender equality and equity in particularly at community level.

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