

UPBRINGING OF A GIRL CHILD IN A PATRILINEAL SOCIETY

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Abstract; The article upbringing of a child in patrilineal society is purely a qualitative study. Qualitative research techniques are used for this study which include transact walk, social mapping, meeting with small social groups, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion, all these tools provide sufficient data for the research. In this research paper it has been my intentions to explore the upbringing of a child in a patrilineal system existing in a Punjabi village, Uberda Tatral in Pakistan. Since in a patrilineal society, the lineage is supposed to be continued by the males, therefore the male sex holds a vital position. On the other hand the females who are considered subordinate to men are treated as “lesser human beings”. For obvious reasons, the male enjoys maximum rights and privileges in a male dominated society as compared to the females. Although, the argument of this article revolves around an upbringing of the girl child, I have tried to focus more on the role of nurture in the process of upbringing of a girl child in particular.

Key words: Up-bringing, girl child, tradition, family, patrilineal society.

INTRODUCTION

Child up-brining is expressed within cultural tradition and patterns of Communication which continues to persist because of tried and known safety in the previous generations. The behaviour of a child and adolescent is greatly determined by the child rearing practices and the overall upbringing process to which a child is exposed at the various stages of its development. The norms and value of a particular culture influences the upbringing of a child to a great extent. Moreover an individual takes over the norms and values of the society during his/her upbringing in order to secure award and avoid punishment called as enculturation process.

In many regions, patriarchal societies, men determine the course of a woman’s life, and men have the final say in every decision they are faced with. Girls are often singled out to help at home because of cultural norms. Girls are kept home to work on the family farms and household chores. In a small minority of cases, girls engage in part-

time labour and attend school when they can be spared. Generally, they simply do not get the opportunity to attend school.

In this research I have used psychological approaches given by –Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead who gave explanations that, different cultures could be characterized in terms of personality they produce. For both of them, culture and personality were strongly linked. Mead concludes from her study in New Guine, that culture was mainly responsible for enculturation of child in a specific personality.

“Many people are of the opinion that there is much too much brining-up. Clearly upbringing they understand the attempt to form the child but forget that there is no such thing as not up-brining. Every word every act whether in dressing, at house work in earnest or fun, everything that child ears of us in course of a day. As long as we live, we educate our children for better or worse, as long as our children live with us”(M.Mead 1955).

So child rearing customs are at the base of personality structure found in any society. Girl child seems more likely to conform to adult wishes and commands. Boys tried to exert dominance. In play, boy seems to play in their large groups, girls in small ones. "Parents have specific choice of toys and type of play priorities regarding both boys and girls"(ghosh 1990). Girls are mostly seen playing with dolls and household items, while boys with gun and cars. These behavioural differences are the result of the socialization that is provided to the child by its parents and kin groups. Parent may unconsciously want to see the differences between girl and boy and may therefore produce them in socialization.

It is an undeniable fact that the role of the society, norms and values of a particular culture influences the upbringing of a child to a great extent. However my research paper aims at determining the overall process of the up bringing of a girl child in patrilineal society. Since in a patrilineal system, the male gender is responsible for the continuity of the lineage, therefore the significance of the female sex is much lesser. A girl child is seen as a burden on the family and she is much neglected in terms of the provisions of the basic rights through their upbringing. I focused at these stages of the child's life, early childhood and adolescence.

Proceeding towards development stages of the child, this research is an attempt to find out how the various aspects such as nutrition, health and education a very significant role in child upbringing, are determined socio-culturally. The mobility of the girl child is another major issue that I will debate upon in my research. This is again not a very unique idea in terms of Pakistani culture only. For instance in rural Bangladesh, Girls of eleven or twelve year learn to stay in the family compound. So this article has focused on the role of kinship and patrilineal culture in moulding the of the girl child to the specific expected roles as being process of upbringing culturally determined.

METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary sources of information were used for data collection.

Review of printed material serves a secondary source of data collection. The data collection exercise has been bifurcated as follows: At the initial stage, to equip myself with the understanding of preliminary facts which are primarily collected by the secondary source of information like review of the: Revenue record of village, Gazetteer of district.

After review of the printed material, ethnographic techniques were, include transact walk, social mapping, meeting with small social groups etc, used. This exercise helped, especially to get aquatinted with the overall setup of the community, key informants, influential people, daily routines of the community, timing of certain activities etc. For conducting Anthropological research the importance of participant observation cannot be denied. By becoming a member of a society, and participating in birth, marriage and death ritual, helped to gain the trust of villagers. Survey helped to point the relevant group of people. A sample of 40 households from a total of 175 was taken on the basis of variables i.e. male female children, income groups. In depth study was conducted with the help of informal interviews and focus group discussions F.G.D helped in getting information from young girls who felt shy when they were asked questions in private.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The process of upbringing is seen at these two stages of development as distinctive in needs from each other.

Early childhood

The early age of child hood is critical in the formation and development of intelligence, personality and social behaviour. Play is very significant at this stage of child. It offers the child an opportunity to be creative. A child can experiment and try out ideas in toy play, in constructions of different sorts and in dramatization. The parents have specific choices of toys and priorities regarding the play of girl.

They mostly buy dolls and household items and utensils for their daughters. On the other hand boys play with cars, guns, bats, balls etc. usually on their own choice. Dressing of the girl is carefully supervised from this age while the boys of this age are even seen running unclothed in the streets. As in a study of Palauan (South West African tribe), Barnett (1965) said, "Boys go without clothing entirely; girls are covered about the age of three with a loose dress." (H.G. Barnett 1965). Even the girls in the village were told that their dolls should be properly dressed, as it is shameful to have a doll without clothes. From the preschool age these little girls start wearing a veil as advised by their elders. A four-year-old girl was by her grandmother to cover her head with veil because "If you don't cover your head with a veil you will be trapped by the witch."

These preschool children (3-6 years) are sending to the village mosque learning Holy Quran right from this age. Besides the religious education, younger children were sent to school. Young (1995) argues that "early childhood nutrition interventions can lead to substantial increase in lifetime wealth." (Young 1995).

During the early years of upbringing of children much attention is not paid to the diet of the child. Whatever they like they eat and what parents could afford is given to them. A child's physical growth can be influenced not only by food intake but also by proper health care. As in one case, shahada a five years old girl was a victim of marasmus locally called "*sukhey ki bimari*" and as a result she died. Her mother told that it was caused by the "*saya*" (shadow) of an evil. It is reported that 56% of mothers attributed marasmus (called soka or dried up, in Punjab) to the casting of an evil shadow." (D.S. Mull and J.D. Mull 1988, 186)

Diseases, as an example diarrhoea, a very common health problem of the children of this age are believed to take place due to hot and cold items, are usually treated by home remedies.

It involves the visits of shrines of holy men (Peer) or reading Quran, blowing of holy verses towards the child (dam) and drinking of holy water. Very

few mothers reported using a biomedical treatment for the diarrhoea.

In Uberda Tatral, the role of grandparents in social and moral development of toddlers and preschool children is very important as they spent most of the time with them. When mothers were doing the household chores or had to go out of the house, they left the children under the supervision of grandmothers. They look after them and train them for certain tasks particularly girls were taught how to hold the room or how to clean the house. They were also kept engaged in helping the mothers in household activities like cleaning, washing and cooking. It is the start of their training for future roles.

Pre-adolescents

Approximately from the seven years of age, is the age of fast physical growth of the child and parents very carefully start giving different household responsibilities to these youngsters. At this boy's diet is given more importance. Boys were always given milk, butter, meat, desi ghee and other nutritious food items as the parents say that the boys are supposed to do more strenuous work and nutritious food will enhance their health and strength. Another very important point is that better food will help him gain adulthood sooner and this would ultimately contribute in the addition to the family income. A girl's diet on the other hand was not given due attention. She was not allowed to have more nutritious food to delay her puberty. "While the chunks of meat are kept for her brother and she was fed with plain gravy" (Hafeez 1990, 19). A boy's choice is usually kept in mind while preparing the food.

The issue of "Hot" and "Cold" is very much believed upon in a Pakistani society. All types of food are categorized into these two main categories. A girl's diet includes mainly the cold items because it is assumed that cold food delays her puberty to some extent. Therefore girls are generally prohibited to eat meat, eggs and other hot items whereas boys themselves have a liking for all the above mentioned items and they are also forced by parents so that they should not suffer any weaknesses and reach early puberty.

In the village under study, the case is similar to that of India and Bangladesh as mentioned in one of the studies of the SAARC countries, Shanti Ghosh (1990) said that "Boys in India receive more milk products"(Ghosh 1990). In patrilineal society, a girl has to live under the shadow of her mother who serves as a role model for her. The cultural patterns of the women being the last one to eat have negative effect on their health situations. Very often she takes the leftovers as she has to wait for her brother and father to eat first.

The economic aspect is very important in determining the food given the child. If the financial position of the parents would be a little strong imperatively, the diet of the children would not face any adverse effects. But if the economic status is low, the parents do not pay much attention to diet of girl. In one of a case, a respondent had six daughters and one son, told that she could not afford to buy eggs for all her daughters; however she can buy one for her son. Therefore she hides the eggs for her son. She cannot provide same quantity and quality of food to her son as well as daughters.

Health care:

It is found that there is a whole deal of difference between the health facilities provided to girls and those to the boys of this age. Boys are provided with much better health facilities .Even the initial stages of a boy's ailment is treated properly while girls are always preferred to be treated by traditional healers and home remedies. Table 1 shows the type of health treatment preference for the sick girl child.

Table 1: preference of the health treatment for girls

MODES OF TREATMENT	% RESPONSE OF PARENTS
Allopathic	14%
Spiritual healers	43%
Homeopathic	19%
Home remedies	24%,

The concept of home remedies was also pretty common in village Tatal. The use of home

remedies sometimes result in some serious damage , as in case of Seema an eleven years old girl got her foot burnt and instead of going to the doctor, she applied a home remedy, that of putting charcoal on the foot and as a result the condition worsened to a great extent.

Mai ji on the other hand is quite famous among females for the health seeking. Since Anis the lady health worker, was a family planning worker therefore the parents consider it shameful to take their daughters to her, in case what people would say. The M.B.B.S doctor available in the vicinity was a male. So again parents hesitate to get their daughter treated by him because they have to face family pressures for this. Also for financial reasons they are reluctant to provide proper treatment unless and until there is an emergency, rest of them were not in favour of allopathic treatment for their daughters because these medicines are "hot" and they were afraid that results in early onset of puberty .When they were asked about why they take male child to the doctor and not the female, it was highly shameful for them if a young male doctor should check her chest or hold her hand.

Research revealed number of reasons for the higher number of girls getting sick than the boys. Firstly, for girls there was lack of balanced diet. As a result various types of calcium, iodine and protein deficiencies occur in a female body. They got anaemic due to loss of blood during menstruation and therefore need much more nutritious food which unfortunately they were not provided with.

Going to shrines for medical aid is quite common among the villagers. Their ultimate resort was to visit a shrine to seek help.

Therefore, we can say that although the health factor which should be a major concern for the growing up children, as it is said that a healthy child has a healthy mind. Still there is a whole deal of negligence in this context on the part of the villagers.

Schooling

Education is another area where parents are usually inclined to spend less on the daughter

than on their sons. Girls usually go to school for primary education only. Two obvious reasons given by parents were the amount which is to spend on girl's education is better utilized for buying and preparing their dowry items. The second reason is that if girls after primary level go out of the village which means somebody has to escort them. Unprotected girl travelling from the home to school is a risky thing and may damage their honor. The household work is another general reason. Mothers refuse to send their daughters to schools as these young girls are helping hands for their mothers in the various household chores. The type of household activities that are carried out by small girls in the village are ;bringing fire wood , cleaning, a little bit of cooking, taking care of the younger siblings so that their mother can either go out in the fields or do the household work conveniently. If they go to school, their mothers would not be able to manage everything at their own. "The girl students drop out due to their engagement in household work, responsibility to provide care to younger siblings, and pressure for early marriages (Hafeez 1990).

In addition to these reasons few more significant responses were like it was not a custom in the village to send girls to the school for education. The question of treating both boys and girl equally for educational pursuit is unwise idea when they have to perform entirely different tasks when they grow up.Children belonging to higher economic groups enjoy the best of the educational facilities. However there are exceptions for those girls who have done their graduation but privately. But what needs to be mentioned here is that such girls and such families have faced criticism from community. Almost half of her in-law's family had a complete cut off with them. Their villagers pass teasing comments on the girl whenever they find her waiting for transport to go to the college. Another very interesting piece of information is that, parents have the feeling that if the girls study too much, they would not be able to find a suitable spouse for them "In context where girls are 'born to marry' parents see little economic value in educating a girl and shapes their

decisions not to invest in the education of the girl child." (Mernnisi 1985, 132).

Regarding the male education, parents want their sons to receive higher education; still it was entirely the boy's will if he wanted to go to school. It was noted that after matric, boys are the age of roaming about idle and free of all responsibilities. Kinship and cultural traditions was seen major factors influencing the upbringing of the child. As Forte's phrases it, "A kinship word is package of definitions, rules and direction for conduct. It is a store of information but also a tool for action."(A.Fortes 1969).The agents of socialization are parents and kins as well as the local community, imposing particular values on the child.

Socialization may be considered successful if the values imposed on the child are internalized and reproduced. "Kinship is a store of information but a tool of conduct" (A.Fortes 1969, 51). This established patriarchal system has long endured the passage of time cutting across geographical boundaries as well as religious and class differences(B.Ras-work 2006). It was to ensure that she should not suffer from any loss of honour. The concept of an honourable girl is both an instrumental and terminal value, that is, both a standard for and a goal of behaviour."(B.Lotte.Mortensen 1983, 217).

The practice of *parda* is seen as a restriction on the mobility of girls it further affects their education. By observing purdah, the girls are trained along the lines of sex differentiation. It does not only indicate the separations of a girl from the man's world but also indicates the male's honour which is related to their women's behaviour.

"Socially purdah is a tribute to a males' Honour which is vested in the behaviour of Family women and to his ability to Protect and provide for them."(T.A.Abdullah and S.A.Zeidenstein 1982).The restricted mobility and observance of purdah by a girl is evident from the fact that if a male guest arrives, any female member never serves the food. The same in Rural Bangladesh, "Male guest and visitors and even male Servants are attended by male members of the family. Not

only is the women unseen, but often their voices are not heard by outsiders.”(Hafeez 1990).

Educated girls were as threat to cultural norms by being argumentative and develop their own personal wills. This attitude prevents them from compromising and settling down with any difficult situation. In one case future mother –in-law was against her education, that she wants a daughter in law, not a teacher.

Being product of the male dominating society, the girl child is at the mercy of patriarchal elements. “The prohibition of physical movement is tightened with the age of the girl to ensure her safety and family honour.(Y.Cohen 1971)

There were variety of people who had their own views and opinions about their daughter’s education. Table 2 shows the drop out reasons from school as the data revealed

Table 2: Why girls dropout of schools

REASONS	%
There are no financials gains to the parents.	45.2
It is not customary to educate girls.	0.8
There is no proper arrangement for girl’s education.	0.2
Since boys and girls are not equal, there is no question of educating both.	8.4
Girls become too independent after getting education.	3.7
Higher education restricts the selection of spouse.	3.1
<i>Purda</i> is the reason for not educating the girls.	2.8
Girls have to do the house hold work.	1.1
Education do not help girls in their future life.	0.8

Since the society is characterized as patriarchal, where women are culturally subordinate to their men. “In the patrilineal society man gains

complete rights over the possession of his own children” (Fox 1967, 121).

The girls themselves have revealed a lot of information. The highest percentage said that their relatives are against their education. A few of them also said that since they are poor they cannot afford to go to school. A very amusing response was that the girls confessed that they are not good enough to study. Some said that there is a lot of household world which cannot be done by mother alone. A few also blamed the teachers who did not treat them well and they cannot listen to the abusive language they use. Table 3 shows information as the girls thought they were removed from schools.

Table 3: Reasons given by girls for not in school

REASONS	%
There is no school for girls.	33
The relatives are against the education.	22.1
Poverty is the reason for not educating me.	18
I am not good enough for study.	8.4
They don't send me school because of work at home.	11.5
The teacher does not treat me well.	2

Play & pastime

The value of play in a child’s development is uncontroversial. The paly helps the child to develop as a healthy person and the contributions of play towards this goal cannot be substituted by any other channel. Similarly recreational activities have their own functional significance. Even Redcliff Brown has categorized seven basic needs of human beings one of which is recreation. The play behaviour of a girl in Uberda Tatral is greatly influenced by the attitude of parents towards the play and also by the norms and values of the society. They expect from girls to play at home and generally discourage outdoor plays. The norms and values of society are negative towards the outdoor and physical play of girls.

The play of a girl reflects to the cultural tradition. The entire play activity scenes reveals around home related themes. The most common themes include caring the biological and physical needs of doll, the doll interaction with the parents and other siblings and the social behaviour of the doll. The doll play reaches its climax when a marriage between two dolls simulated. Girls in such place are intently prepared for future roles.

The various other types of games played by the girls of this age were namely as; *ghar ghar* , *neeli pari*, *panj getra* ,*kccri kara* , *guddi gudda* etc.. Boys are mostly involved in physical games like cricket, hockey and football, which involves running and physical exercise and it is very good for growing body. They are encouraged to play outside their house so that they could learn how they have to interact with the outer world in future. Children are nurtured according to their gender from very initial age, girls helping their mothers, staying near the homes and being taught to be obedient. "While boys are allowed to play more outside, to roam more freely and to display self-confidence and aggression".(UNICEF 1992). At the age of fifteen, harsh and strict supervision of the girl activities is expected. Activities like going out of the house and buying clothes are also all supervised by the male or elder members of the family."The time 'when' and the place 'where' they can go are decided by their parents. More importantly the male member of the family"(Kumari 1990).

CONCLUSION

The principle idea of this article is that the how the cultural practices change the world of a girl child by bringing up with different norms and values. For obvious reasons male enjoys the maximum rights and privileges in a patrilineal society. Although the argument revolve around an upbringing of the child, I have focused more on a girl child .The girl child is viewed as a transient member to be nurtured temporarily until she marries. The health, diet, education, play and mobility are determined by the cultural norms. Nutritional inequality between boy and girl are at both the cultural level and the economic levels. The mother or older women

usually determine the allocation of food to children in the household. Most mothers consider their own nutritional needs secondary to those of the male members of the family. Girls who are future mother lien brought-up with this diet, grown out to be weaker individuals.

There are number of factors like customs, kinship, socio practices, economy and religion are few socio-cultural factors which frequently make the girl child less important and subordinate to her male counterpart. In a patrilineal society, the females hold a secondary position. The socializing processes observed for boys and girls are designed and rigorously applied to in still a feeling of superiority to boys while girls are groomed to accept subjugation and inferiority with apathy.

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