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Doing Gender: Construction of Young Gender Identities in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Engagement of Young girls and boys with the social world is an issue of academic interest across a number of societies. Thus to understand and unearth this phenomenon, this paper is an attempt to explore how young boys and girls in Pakistan engage with the social world (schooling, family, and leisure) and whether their engagement overturns or resists key regulations and normative expectations for girls and boys. The paper, thus, highlights how gendered socialization, both in the family and school, regulates and perpetuates the gendered social order of Pakistani society. The paper also focuses on how an individual's class location profoundly influences one's belief about and experience of gender. To undertake this study, stratified random sampling technique was employed and a sample size 220 students of class 9 and 10 (aged 15-16) was taken. The data conclusively reflects that children construct themselves as gendered beings and develop gender identities that carry immediate and cumulative effects as they learn and perform their gendered place in the social world.

Keywords: Feminist, gender order, gender identities, gendered socialization, social constructionism.

Introduction

Pakistan has one of the world's largest youth demographic bulges-63 per cent comprises of youth. Of these, 58.5 million are 20-to-24-year olds while 69 million are aged under 15 (Ali and Hafeez, 2017).Arguably, transitions from childhood to youth, and youth to adulthood are inescapably gendered-they are about how do boys become men and how do girls become women? Examining young gender identities, particularly how they are produced and regulated, can give deeper insight into broader gender patterns and arrangements in Pakistan. This study, thus, focuses on institutional arrangements and cultural practices which shape young boys' and girls' beliefs about and experience of gender. The paper investigates factors affecting young boys' and girls' subject and careers choices. It seeks to

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explore how young boys and girls engage with their schooling, domestic arena, parents and leisure time. Exploring families, schools and other institutional settings as sites for production of gender, we argue that what young boys and girls learn in different institutional settings (families, schools and mass media) produce masculine and feminine attitudes, motivation and personalities that fit young people into their adult roles. Thus, the paper seeks to highlight how institutional settings and cultural processes produce and reproduce gender identities and maintain gender order.

Significance of the study

Recent years have seen growing interest in the study of young gender identities in the global north (see Nayak and Kehily, 2008; Kehily, 2007). A considerable number of research studies has been conducted on 'gender and schooling, the gendered responses of boys and girls to academic learning, the different playground games they may play' (Nayak and Kehily, 2008, 105). As a matter of fact, much of the research work on young gender identities has been carried out in the west. Nevertheless, current scholarship and research on gender and youth have stressed for a 'global perspective on gender that recognizes differences and diversity across time and space' (Nayak and Kehily, 2008, 3). It will not be an exaggeration to argue that a study from the global south, especially from a developing country like Pakistan, would significantly contribute to the existing scholarship on how gender relations are produced and reproduced across societies. We believe that the analysis of gender relations in the context of Pakistan, having one of the world's largest youth bulges, needs special attention in the current globalized world. Locating the study within the global scholarship on young gender identities, we first set out a theoretical framework to shed light on gender as a socially constructed category rather than a biological one. Drawing on social constructionist understanding of gender, the paper argues that gender identities are plural and diverse, and that they intersect with other social identities such as class. The remaining part of the paper explains methodological steps employed for conducting this study and making sense of the field data.

Theoretical Framework

In sociology the term 'sex' is used to refer to biological differences between males and females. 'Gender' is used to refer to everything that is socially

constructed and culturally transmitted, including masculinities and femininities. Thus, sociology of gender and related knowledge believe that gender difference is socially constructed and culturally transmitted. As students of sociology we are drawn to the idea that gender characteristics and gender identities are purely the consequence of how we are socialized and accepted in society (see Francis, 2000; Skelton, Francis and Smulyan, 2006; Gorman, 1992). Thus, the focus of the study is purely on sociological meaning of socially constructed gender identities and gender relations. The argument is based on the assertion that the social expectations connected with gender roles depend on a number of factors, namely; cultural, political, economic, social and religious ones. They are equally affected by state law, class and family background, as well as prejudices spread in the given society.

Social constructionism, theorizing on gender, provides a useful perspective to examine how social structures and institutional practices shape young boys' and girls' lives in Pakistan and maintain the gendered order. Social constructionist theorists argue that gender is constructed in our everyday lives in our interactions with others. This means gender is an ongoing process that arises out of interaction in the *doing* of doing gender. Processes of doing gender are not only carried by individuals alone, but also through socially approved standardized practices such as laws or family, school and other institutional settings. Institutions and structures play a role in setting context for interaction and to a (greater or lesser) degree guiding the doing of gender as the doing of gender shapes institutional contexts. The very process of doing gender is that which creates the world as if it was natural and based on inherent difference (see West and Zimmerman, 1991; Butler, 1990). This means 'gender is something that is accomplished in the course of interaction' (Edley, 2001: 192). It does not have an existence outside of the doing of it (West and Zimmerman, 1991).

The approach of doing gender shifts gender as a characteristic or trait that lives in individuals to one that lives in interaction. For West and Zimmerman (1987), gender is enacted or performed in interaction. Judith Butler (1997), concurring with social constructionists, argues that there is no biological or essential basis for gender and that gender does not correspond to biological sex. She further asserts that the repetitious performances of male and female in accordance with social norms reifies the categories, creating the appearance of a naturalized and essential binary. It is asserted that gender is never a fixed category or descriptor of an individual, but an individual is always 'doing' gender, performing or deviating from the socially accepted

performance of gender stereotypes. This is very similar to West and Zimmerman's gender as an emergent feature of interaction. West and Zimmerman argument points to how institutions affect individual's doings of gender. First, doings of gender occur in institutional settings. Second, the norms of appropriate gender are drawn from the institutional sites and settings. Their discussion gives us the idea of how they theorize the structure-agency nexus or the relationship between institutions and individual interactions. The doing of gender makes institutionalized or structural arrangements based on sex category as if normal or natural and thus legitimate. This suggests that doings of gender is socially guided by social structures and institutionalized practices. This means that what can be known about gender identities is the product of cultural knowledge. Social constructionist perspective on gender, thus, enables us to argue that gender identities and gender relations are shaped by the diverse and changing social contexts in which they are negotiated. 'From this perspective ideas about what constitutes masculinity and femininity have changed and differ between societies, as well as between groups within a given society' (Kehily, 2007: 115). As such gender identities are flexible and intersect with other type of identities such as class.

Gender and class are components of social structure and social interaction. Boys and girls or women and men are differently embedded in locations created by these cross-cutting hierarchies. Class and gender are closely inter connected through the various ways. Their mutual effects can be seen on a wide range of social phenomena i.e., education, career aspirations and leisure time(Wright, 2000). The mutual constitutive relations among gender and class identities have become the central tenet of feminist thinking and research, one that McCall (2005) and others suggested as the most important contribution of feminist theory to our current understanding of gender (Shields, 2008). The Inter sectionality perspective asserts that an individual's social class location profoundly influence one's belief about and experience of gender. Recognizing the importance of the intersection of class and gender identities, we focus on how gender relations and gender identities are experienced differently by boys and girls across social classes in Pakistan. It does not mean that class determines gender relations and identities in a developing country like Pakistan. Nevertheless, we attempt to explain how social class location offers various academic opportunities to the elite girls to struggle over gender relations in their own lives.

Drawing on social constructionist understanding of gender we focus to examines how young girls and boys form their gender identities in the complex process of institutional settings in Pakistan. We are also concerned with how gender interacts with class. The class and gender nexus requires research and discussion as women in Pakistan, like their counterparts elsewhere in the world, have been subjected to double oppression of class and gender (Rouse, 1988). Albeit, women access to education, health, property and political rights in Pakistan has improved over the years but their overall social status and access to resources and opportunities in society are still dismal, especially when compared to the male counterparts of their respective classes (Ullah, 2013; Rouse, 1988). For example, the extension of education has enabled the bourgeois women to participate in politics and business. In fact, there is additional variation within this category depending upon whether women come from economically rich urban background or the rural and feudal background. Similarly, extension of education and skills has allowed the middle class women to have gainful employment in the public domain. This, however, has not resulted in an improvement of their position within the household, where they are still expected to perform domestic chores (unless they are privileged enough to hire maids/servants who take over this task) (Ullah and Khan, 2011). Nevertheless, educated, upper class and urban women, particularly young, enjoy a certain degree of gender equality which is not available to uneducated, lower middle class and rural women (Ullah and Ali, 2013). What is missing in the gender and class nexus is that there is no or little focus on investigating how gender interacts with class, particularly when it comes to the analysis of young women and men engagement with the social world.

Defining class is, however, a bit difficult as neither classical, i.e. Marx and Weber, nor contemporary sociologists, i.e. Wrights, have a clear cut, agreed upon definition of it. This study, drawing on insights from Marx, Weber and Wright, categorize social class as elite class (people with considerable resources and means of income in the form of land, industries etc), professional middle class (people who do not have sufficient means of production like the economic elite, but posses educational credentials owing to which they have considerable high salaries and life style like the economic elite), lower middle class (people holding small property and /or micro level family businesses but lack cultural capital/ good educational credentials), and the working-class (manual workers or people engage in some low wages service sector). We are aware that other scholars may approach and

categorize social class in their studies in a manner different from ours(see Ullah, 2013). However, these differences are inconsequential as individuals do not necessarily fit into one social class.

Methodology

This research investigated that how socialization processes, both primary and secondary, construct boys and girls as mutually exclusive categories of gender. The participants in this study were 220 young boys and girls (110 boys and 110 girls) from two different types of schools: public schools and private schools. Students of class 9 and 10 (aged 15-16) were selected through stratified random sampling technique. The reasons for focusing on secondary school students were: a) this is an age (15-16 years) which is critical for identity formation; b) this is pivotal in developing the critical skills of decision-making, and c) this provides a link between childhood and adulthood.

Data was collected by using structured interview guide which comprised some open ended questions as well. Data collection process was completed in three phases: first, lists of all class 9 and 10 students were collected from each school. After getting lists, students were divided into two broad academic groups: i) science group and ii) arts and humanity group (in the case of co-education gender was also used as criteria for stratification). Students from each group in each school were selected for interview through stratified random sampling method. The roll numbers of selected students were communicated to the selected school principals for onward intimation to the students. In phase two, briefing on the purpose of the study was given to the selected students in each school in order to get genuine responses. In phase three, selected students were interviewed on one to one basis in the central hall of the school where the nominated teachers and other students were also present but a distance was maintained so that the answer to the questions were not heard by the teachers and other students. This practice did not affect the quality of data as, Rowbotham and Beynon (2001: 84) argue that 'if you put people [respondents] in a situation where they feel at ease they will talk absolutely clearly and [freely]…all you have to do is to listen to and ask the question that is central to the issue'. In addition to students' interviews, observation method was also used for data collection.

In exploring schools and families institutions as sites for the production of gender identities we gave consideration to factors affecting young boys' and girls' subject choices and careers aspirations. We also focused on gender relations in families, domestic sphere and in everyday leisure spaces.

Findings

In order to explore what kind of institutional arrangements and cultural practices shape them engendered individuals, this paper applied social constructionism as the major theoretical framework. Focusing on contextual analysis, we come up with the following themes to approach the question of how boys become men and girls women. The themes map the larger picture of how young boys' and girls' subject choices and career aspirations are subject to a form of family and state governmentality. Governmentality, in Foucauldian sense, means the way in which the state exercises control over the body of its citizens. Governmentality, according to Foucault, allows for the creation of 'docile bodies' to be used in modern economic and political institutions (Foucault, 1977). State decision of offering home economics in female schools explicitly disciplines girls in line with domestic ideology thesis (see the discussion under the heading 'Engagement of boys and girls in domestic chores and the perpetuation of domestic ideology' in this study). Engagement of young boys and girls in domestic chores shows how young boys and girls construct gender identities under the conventional binary structure of females versus males. Television watching, magazine and newspapers reading as well as playing sports can be seen to provide spaces for the construction of normative masculinity and femininity. These spaces and areas emerged from the initial analysis as key practices that illustrate the 'doing of gender' in Pakistani context. They suggest how gender practices are embedded within the social fabric of Pakistani society and come to shape the choices and possibilities open to young boys and girls as gendered subjects.

Boys' and girls' course and subject choices: In Pakistan students go through compulsory subjects till grade 8. In grade 9, students make choices in three broad areas: (a) science group-chemistry, biology, physics; (b) arts group-local language, Islamic studies, and general science; (c)technology group-mathematics, physics and computer sciences. Urdu, English, Pakistan Studies, and Islamic studies are compulsory subjects for all students. Entry to science group is normally on the basis of intelligence test while all other

groups are open to all. In case of all female schools, *home economics* is another option which is not available in boys' schools. However, home economics is offered in all female public schools only and likewise studied dominantly by girls from lower middle and working class backgrounds. Teaching home economics to girls is highly revealing of state' efforts to perpetuate the domestic ideology thesis and construct girls' femininity in line with the existing gender codes (see Ullah, 2013).

While examining how young girls and boys make their subject and course choices, this study found that course and subject choices among secondary schools boys and girls is a highly gendered phenomenon. Girls who opted for science group were not only less in number than boys but were also interested in biology with the aspirations of a career in medicine, whereas boys mentioned diverse fields with engineering and medicine being the dominant. It is important to highlight that females in arts group (for the most part) pursued 'home economics', except in private schools where the choices were open and multiple. Boys, both in the public as well private schools, had wider range of choices with more boys, dominantly public schools' students, were interested in computer sciences and engineering. Parents' pressure and 'aptitude test' for admission to science group in the public schools were found as the main factors affecting subject choices of young boys and girls. The study findings further revealed that like other developing countries (see Morris, 2002) stereotypical course and subject choices continue in Pakistan which may be seen to provide space for the construction of normative masculinity and femininity.

Course and subject choice in Pakistan is not only a gender but also a class issue. Unlike public schools (see Ullah, 2013), the private schools did not have the subject of home economics and offered a wide variety of optional subjects (e.g., economics, business, world history). The availability of wide range of subjects to the girls in private schools may actually open up access to opportunities unavailable to working class girls. Similarly, the non-availability of home economics to private schools girls may advantage them by providing them an opportunity to diverge from normative femininity (by learning skills and knowledge useful for carrying out domestic chores). To sum up, young girls' 'choices of subject are guided by 'the amount of economic and cultural capital that is available within the family [and schools]' (Werfhorst *et, al., 2*003: 1) and state governmentality.

Boys' and girls' career aspirations: This study shows that the number of boys who were interested in pursuing careers was much higher than girls. Boys also showed greater diversity in their career aspirations than girls (see Table 1). Boys aspired to careers that require significantly more intellectual prowess, higher levels of abstract thinking and efforts than those displayed by girls.

Table 1: Young boys and girls' Career aspirations

Girls' career aspirations	Boys' career aspirations
Doctor	Doctor
Dentists	Engineer
Skin specialist	International businessman
Nurse	Minister
Professor	Bureaucrat
Teacher	Commercial pilot
Fashion designer	Software engineers
Bureaucrat	Banking
	Army
	Intelligence services
	Police
	Army / air force
	Electrical engineer
	Teacher
	Lawyer

Table 1 is highly revealing of gendered career choices among young people in Pakistan. The table is indicative of the fact that teaching and medicine are key careers that young girls must aspire to. Very few female students aspired to careers in traditionally male-dominated fields, i.e. two girls desired to be 'civil servants', one aspired to be a 'fashion designer', and two had an intense aspiration for becoming 'pilot'. However, these girls revealed that these were their wishes which their parents did not approve. One of the female students from the private school said, '*I love to be a fashion designer, especially for celebrity and stars. But my parents don't like [this] wish of mine. They [Parents] strongly reject this idea (pause), they think this is a crazy wish… do I look crazy? No, [she answered herself] so I am studying Bio[logy] etc as my parents want me to be a doctor. So I have to be a doctor Inshallah [God willing]'.* In an almost similar vein, a class 10th female student from government girls' high school

(public school) said, '*I want to become a pilot and I think I can become one, but I don't know what I have to do for becoming a pilot. My mother is illiterate and my father, who was a clerk in a [public sector] university, died when I was in class 5. Whenever I say to my mother that I want to become a pilot she says spread your feet according to your sheet*. *My mother says if I become a nurse that will be a great achievement for us. I don't know what I will become'.*

The above extracts are just a small sample of the young women's voices in Pakistan that suggest that parents have significant impact on children career aspirations. The findings are also indicative of the fact that parents' educational level and socio-economic backgrounds are significant factors that affect young girls' career aspirations.

The findings also suggest that gender and social class are intersecting factors in young students' career aspirations. The aspiration to become a teacher was more common among public schools girls, predominantly from working and lower middle class families (see Saigol, 2010). School teaching is believed to be the best career for women, especially for women from lower middle class background (Ullah and Ali, 2012). School teaching has been idealized for women in public school textbooks (Ullah, 2015). The study did not find a single boy or girl in the private schools who aspired to be a school teacher. Moreover, girls in private schools showed high motivation for completion of their education and going for a job. Girls from the private schools were more enthusiastic in terms of their studies and careers than male students of the same schools and socio-economic background. This suggests that girls from professional middle class and elite family background may be doing better than boys from the same class backgrounds because ambition is a strong predictor of career success (Judge *etal.* 1995).

The study also found that many girls were not encouraged by their parents to aspire to or think of doing a job after completion of their education. One of the students from public schools said, *'My family does not approve of females working [in the public domain]. So far no female in our family has worked in the [public domain]. I am getting education to be a good human being'*. This extract is highly revealing of the fact that education for working and middle class girls is ornamental. Education for them is to learn etiquettes, skills and knowledge which may make them good wives, mothers and sisters (Saigol, 1997; Ullah, 2006). It shows that gender is a class ridden terrain for young girls whose career aspirations and opportunities in the job market are

patterned by social class locations. The nub of discussion here is that gender and family socio-economic background carry profound influence on young girls' career aspirations.

Gender Difference in reading for Pleasure: A considerable number of studies have found that boys enjoy reading less than girls (see Topping, 2010; Clark and Douglas, 2011). Studies in the western societies also show that girls and boys typically enjoy different kinds of reading: girls like to read magazines and fiction; boys more commonly read newspapers and comic books (OECD, 2010). This study's findings partially depart from what is common in the west. The study found that an overwhelming majority (63 %) of girls read newspapers and magazines with equal interest whereas very few boys (40 %) read newspapers. It is also important to mention here that magazines and newspapers reading were reported more by girls from private schools than public schools (see table 2 in annexure). This crosscutting difference between the public and the private schools girls' reading habit stresses the importance ofthe intersection of gender and class. Our assertion is that reading for pleasure can be seen as indicator of 'cultural capital' that increases the vocabulary and knowledge of girls from elite and professional middle class backgrounds. Sullivan and Matt (2015:9) argue that 'reading [for pleasure] is linked to substantial cognitive progress between the ages of 10 and 16….Reading is most strongly linked to progress in vocabulary…reading for pleasure is more strongly linked than parental education to cognitive progress in adolescence'.

As mentioned earlier the reasons for gender difference in reading for pleasure in Pakistan are different than those cited in the west (see Matthew & Morrison, 2009; Coles & Hall, 2002).Contrary to the west, in Pakistan the gender gap in reading may be due to the fact that boys go out in the evening to play with friends while girls don't. Majority of the male students narrated that they did go out and play sports in the evening with their friends. The study did not find a single girl respondent who was allowed to play with her female friend(s) in the evening (also see Ullah 2013; Ullah and Skelton, 2014). One female student from the private school said '*I read newspaper and sometime magazine or watch TV in the evening*. *I am not allowed to play with my friends in the evening'*.

The lack of reading habit among boys may be one of the reasons for the recent concern of boys' underachievement in Pakistan as reading 'for pleasure had the strongest effect on children's vocabulary

development…[and] enable children to absorb and understand new information and affect their attainment in all subjects' (Sullivan and Matt, 2015, 11). However, this may be taken an assumption which needs to be investigated in the context of Pakistani society as girls' education attainment does vary by social class background, the type of school they attend and their geographical location. Unlike girls from elite and professional middle class backgrounds, girls from working class and rural areas face multiple challenges and perform less well than boys of their own social class and areas (UNESCO, 2004).

Engagement of boys and girls in domestic chores: One of the primary means through which young boys and girls define themselves is through and against one another and alongside cultural notions of masculinity and femininity. This study found that carrying out domestic chores was an intrinsic part of the daily routine for girls. An overwhelming majority of the girls revealed that washing utensils, making tea, helping in cooking and serving food, pressing dresses and even sweeping house were part of their daily routines. Girls considered the performance of domestic chores as their duty and natural role. The key reasons mentioned by girls for doing domestic chores and boys for avoiding the same are summarized in table 3.

Table 3: Reasons girls gave for carrying out domestic chores

Reasons common among girls for carrying domestic chores	Reasons common among boys for not doing domestic chores
I am the elder daughter and I have to do it. I love my mother and I want to help her. If girls do not do who will do. Mom wants to train me as a good girl. I want to get my mother prayer. mom scolds me if I don't do	I am not a girl We don't need to do Mother and sister(s) do No ways. Why should we It is females' duty

The acceptance of domestic chores by girls as their natural and normative role and the rejection of the same by boys define what it means to be a man and woman or masculine or feminine. Declaring domestic chores as normative feminine activity, a boy in this study asserted, *'you [referred to the researchers] mean boys should help in cooking and washing [he giggled and continued] you mean we should also wear bangles, ear rings, and dupta[a piece*

*of cloth that Muslim women/girls put on to cover their heads and bosom]'.*Contributing towards this strong gender lived experience and gendered socialization is possibly the gender bias textbooks that emphatically reinforce domestic chores as women's natural role and public sphere as men's prerogative (Ullah, 2013; Ullah and Skelton 2013; Ullah *et al*, 2014; Khurshid, et al., 2010; Mattu and Hussain, 2003). Different studies (for example Khurshid, *et al*., 2010; Ullah 2013) continuously found that not only grown up females are depicted in stereotypical roles but small girls have been shown engaged in domestic chores (Ullah, 2013). Moreover, there has not been a single text or illustration that portrays a man/boy who is engaged in domestic chores.

Despite the prevalence of strong domestic ideology and association of domestic chores with girls as their natural and normative role, some boys (9 out 120) held that they did extend help in domestic chores, e.g. some time making tea, pressing their school uniform, cleaning and polishing their shoes or helping out their mothers in kitchen. The engagement of this insignificant number of boys in domestic chores may be seen as a significant change in term of challenging the dominant gender order and domestic ideology. It is also an important finding that very few girls, mostly from the elite schools, said that they did some help in cooking, tea making, and dish washing but did not do much domestic chores as their parents gave greater priority to their studies and completion of school work. This shows 'gender role' fluidity across classes. The crux of the discussion here is that family, school knowledge and class location seem the obvious and powerful forces scalping young boys and girls as masculine and feminine subjects. This brining up of girls to accept the stereotypical domestic role may certainly be reproducing gender hierarchies on generational basis.

Gender and television watching: Boys and girls revealed different tastes in watching television. 80 per cent girls liked watching dramas, 72 percent liked religious programmes and82 percent loved watching cooking programmes and cartoons. Contrary to girls, an overwhelming majority (73 percent) of the boys watched sports while 67 and 78 per cent referred to National Geographic and films respectively as their favorite channels. Table 4 (attached as annexure) depicts a comprehensive and clear picture of television watching as a gender issue among young girls and boys. The study also found that girls mentioned a wider range of programmes than boys. However, these choices are vividly stereotypical and gendered: girls' interest in watching cooking programmes, dramas, religious programmes and boys'

interest in sports, films and national geographies carry with them baggage of femininity and masculinity. The study also unpacked that majority (73) of girls' timing and programmes types were limited and censored by their parents. Boys enjoyed freedom of time as well as the types of programmes they wished to watch. Only a tiny number (24) revealed that their timing and TV programmes were controlled by their parents. Very few students (17) revealed that they did not have TV in their homes. The gendered nature of television watching and sexism in television programs in Pakistan (see Ullah and Nisar, 2011; Ullah and Nisar 2014) contribute to our understandings of the ways young boys and girls construct themselves as masculine and feminine individuals and contribute to the sustenance of gender order.

Boys and girls intimacy with their parents: One of the key findings of the study is that young people, irrespective of their gender, did not have better communication with their fathers. An overwhelming majority (67 %) of the female students said that they shared their problems with their mothers or elder sisters rather than their fathers. Similarly, 53 percent of the male students revealed that they shared their problems with their mothers or someone else in the family not fathers. A considerable number of the male students said that they did not share their problems with any family member at all. The reasons that they mentioned for not sharing problem with their fathers were fear and scolding. A class 10th student from the public school said: '*I don't share my problem with my father as he becomes angry [at me]'*. Similarly, Zoheeb, class 9th student from the public School asserted '*I don't share my school and other problems with my father [as] he scolds me, even beats me instead of solving the problems'.* Nevertheless, majority of the students from the elite and upper middle social class background revealed that they shared school problems as well as other issues with both parents (father and mother). One of the class 9th students of the private school said: *'I tell my mother. I also tell my father when needed. They visit my school and meet [my] teachers. My father encourages me to tell each and everything to him or my mother …, but I tell my mother each and everything and tell my father only few and serious problems'*. Another student (from class 9) in the elite private school said: *"Abu[1] comes late and he is tired so I avoid increasing his tension. But [my] mother tells him when it is necessary. But I demand my gifts and other things directly from [my] father, he loves me*'.

[1] *Abu is an Urdu/Arabic word which used for father*

These findings reflect and reinforce characteristics associated with traditional notions of masculinity and femininity: fathers as aggressive and serious who maintain a gap between themselves and their children and do not seem to be involved in children's minor issues whereas mothers carry tenderness and softness in their nature. The finding that fathers are informed about serious issues again reinforces the conventional notion of masculinity. These responses still situate "fathers in secondary and part-time role and mothers as primary parents (see Wall and Arnold, 2007; Sunderland, 2006).Parenting on these essentialist lines offers young boys and girls with masculine and feminine role models which communicate them a strong message what it means to be a father and a mother or man and woman.

A room of one's own: In terms of autonomy and independence, Virginia Woolf's 1945 essay '*A Room of One's Own'* has become part of our modern cultural discourses. We understand that a room of one's own doesn't have to be a physical one; but it can be symbolicalor social. Autonomy requires the presence of privacy and the absence of interference. In every day experience, having a room of one's own gives women the private space they need to retreat, think, articulate their thought and put together the fragmented pieces of their identities. This separate room gives them an opportunity to avoid surveillance; it destroys the mirror of distorted self-image and maps their existence in different dimensions (Ullah, 2006). Space, both physical and social, is the key to 'gender performativity' (Butler, 1993). The discussion here is restricted to physical space (room) that female and male students have in their homes. Majority (82 percent) of the boys said that they have a room of their own. Girls revealed that they shared room with sisters or female cousins (in case of joint family). The few girls (31percent) who claimed to have a room of their own were mostly from the private schools, and, therefore, from economically rich family backgrounds (see table 6 as annexed). However, even some girls from private schools (belonging to elite and professional middle class backgrounds) said that they shared rooms with their sisters or female cousin(s). One of the private school students said: *'I share room with baji*[2]*. She is my best friend, we study together, we play ludo, and sometimes fight with pillows. My brothers can't live in one room; they fight in real so they have their separate rooms'*. As indicated by the data, a room of one's own is not only a gender issue but also a class problem. The possession

[2] It is an Urdu language word which is used for elder sister.

of an independent room by young boys and some upper class girls enable them to be private from parents and siblings alike, whereas the sharing of room with other family members leaves the majority girls subject to parents' and siblings' gaze.

Young boys and girls' participation in sports: Since the independence of Pakistan on August 14, 1947, physical education and sports is an integral part of education in Pakistan. Girls and boys, in official discourses, are provided equal opportunities to participate in sports from primary level to the university level. Physical education is an elective subject from class VI to XII (age group 11 to 18 years). Each school is also provided with a physical education teacher. Despite all these official provisions, females' participation in sports is incredibly low and stereotypical choice of sports is evident (Ullah and Ali, 2012).

This study found that only young boys play a variety of sports (cricket hockey, basketball etc) in schools breaks as well as in their leisure time after schools. Girls reported their engagement in some sort of sports activity in schools only as they were not allowed to go out for playing sports in the evening. A young girl from the public school said: '*I read newspapers or watch TV as I am not allowed to go out and play, but my brother regularly goes out for playing cricket after he comes from college'.* Majority of the girls held that they did not play any sports at all. This shows that sport is a highly gendered phenomenon linked to notions of manliness and masculinity. The intersectional analysis of gender and class revealed that young girls from the elite schools mentioned that they play lawn tennis, attend aerobic classes and go to fitness club (sporting and leisure activities not available tolower middle and working lower class girls). The point to be noted here is that in Pakistan sports is not only gendered but the 'practice of sports are socially stratified' (Jravie, 2012: 59).The intersectional analysis of sport, gender and class demands for a separate study that demonstrates the fluidity and contradictory nature of these categories. To sum up the discussion here it is argued that gender identities are being so fixed by earlier socialization in the home and later on reinforced by schools that both, home and school environment effectively reinforce hegemonic masculinity in sports. This provides boys with more and wider range of outdoors competitive sports, whereas girls participated in limited and selected in indoor sports-e.g. skipping badminton etc (for detail discussion on sport see Ullah,2013; Ullah and Skelton, 2014).

Conclusion

The study found that young women and men engagement with the social world is highly gendered and stereotypical. The study's findings affirm that gender is not something that children 'have' but something that they 'do'and're-do'. The study findings also suggest that gender is an ideological tool that produces, reproduces and legitimizes young girls' and boys' subject choices, career aspirations, their leisure time and their overall engagement with the social world along the notion of normative femininity and masculinity. Subject choices and career options are restricted and limited for girls and left open for boys. The nub of discussion is that 'gender relations' are reproduced by family socialization which is later on reinforced through school knowledge (see Francis, 1997; Raymond and Benbow, 1986). It is important to mention here that the amount of opportunities available to young men and women vary greatly between different classes. The study suggests that the issue of gender equality need to be frequently discussed in the family, school and television so that boys/men and girls/women seize to form categories that define and shape acceptable behavior and way of conduct. It is acknowledged that the quest of equality (both class and gender) is a long one. However, through education the construction of equality discourses will lead to the deconstruction of inequality, which in turn may create the new culture that will celebrate and honor difference.

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Annexure

Table-2: Boys and girls reading habits of news paper and magazines

Boys and girls reading habits	Boys		Girls	
	Public school	Private schools	Public school	Private schools
News paper	14	31	22	61
Magazines	9	23	26	63
Story books	07	11	13	35

Table: 3 Boys' and girls' engagement in domestic chores

Respondents Sex	Help/ engagement in domestic chores		Total
	Yes	No	
Boys	09 (8%)	101 (92%)	110
Girls	103 (94%)	07 (06%)	110

Table 4: Boys and girls choice of television programmes

Boys and girls choice of TV programmes	Boys	Girls
Drama	22	80
Films	73	15
Sports	78	13
News	34	12
Cooking programme	12	82
Religious programme	27	78
Political talk shows	44	21
National geography	67	13
Cartoons	19	70

Table 6: A room of one's own: Table 6 explains how space is differentially available to females and males as well as children from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Part A

Boys and girls having their independent room	
Boys	91 (82 %)
Girls	35 (31%) 30 from private schools and just 5 from public schools
Total	126 (52 %)
Part B	
students from different schools having a room of their own	

Categories	Frequency (%)
Girls and boys from private schools	101 (91%)
Girls and boys from public schools	25 (23%)
Total	

N=220 (boys 110 and girls 110)