



Al-Qawārīr - Vol: 06, Issue: 02,
Jan - Mar 2025

OPEN ACCESS

Al-Qawārīr
pISSN: 2709-4561
eISSN: 2709-457X
Journal.al-qawarir.com

Socio-Islamic Perspectives on Gender Equality: A Case Study of Women, Faith, and Feminism at the University of Narowal

Dr. Waqas Ali Khan

Lecturer, Sociology, University of Narowal

Muhammad Sajid Nadeem

Assistant Professor, Sociology,

Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan Sub Campus Lodhran

Awais Khalid

Visiting Lecturer, Psychology, University of Narowal

ABSTRACT

The study is a qualitative exploration of socio-Islamic views of gender equality through a case-study examination of women faculty and student members at the University of Narowal, Pakistan. Using a thematic analysis approach, the study reveals how participants construed Islamic teachings concerning gender roles and how this influenced their views on feminism and empowerment. Researcher also examined how higher education informed women's religious and feminist identities and socio-cultural obstacles many faced in a primarily conservative context. Furthermore, explored institutional policies and campus culture to examine how both promoted or hindered feminist discourse and contributed to gender equality. Objectives of the study are to explore and document the ways female students and faculty at the University of Narowal engage with Islam as it relates to gender equality, to examine the role of higher education in developing women's attitudes and beliefs towards faith and feminism, to investigate the challenges women encounter in pursuing education and career ambitions in a conservative socio-religious context, to analyze the University of Narowal's institutional engagements and campus culture on gender equality and to contribute to the larger field of research on Islamic feminism and women's empowerment in Pakistan. In that context, study findings show that participants were often resistant to patriarchal interpretations of Islam and argued for an egalitarian reading of their religion. Most of the participants (students and faculty) often described education as a transformative practice for women's empowerment that stimulated advanced, critical thinking and the incorporation of feminist ideas in relation to their faith. Unfortunately, the social barriers of family and community oppression and violence were often reproduced and



Socio-Islamic Perspectives on Gender Equality: A Case Study of Women, Faith, and Feminism at the University of Narowal

resisted within a broader patriarchal structural context that reproduced many challenges in their educational endeavours. Institutional issues such as few female administrators or senior leaders also compromised many women's education. This study adds to the larger narrative of Islamic feminism by illustrating how local, faith-based feminist agency can forge strides towards greater gender justice in Muslim societies.

Keywords: Gender equality, Islamic feminism, socio-Islamic perspectives, higher education, socio-cultural challenges

Introduction

The topic of gender equality in Islamic societies takes place in a difficult and complex circumstance where several intersections of scriptural interpretation, patriarchal practices, and contemporary feminist discourse emerge, sometimes even logically contradicting each other (1). In Pakistan, where legal Islamic networks exist alongside deep-seated cultural patriarchy, women's rights are rife with tension and disagreements between conservative religious institutions and progressive reformers, or secular feminists (2). Educated Muslim women at the University of Narowal, in conjunction with the socio-religiously conservative space of Punjab, offer a valuable setting to see how they negotiate their religious identities, feminist consciousness and aspirations for equality while negotiating their degrees in academic settings.

Islamic feminism, as an intellectual and activist stance, attempts to facilitate gender justice and Islamic theology by parsing out religious texts and context with an egalitarian lens and focus (3). Scholars like Asma Barlas⁴ and Amina Wadud⁵ argue the promised egalitarianism, as the original position, was lost over centuries of patriarchal exegesis towards men vis-a-vis women. The complexities of accessing rights for women in Pakistan, where Islam is heavily rooted into ideological and institutional values, challenge women advocates to accept the labeling as "Westernization" while also having to oppose it in favour of religion too (6). These contradictions are especially visible in educational institutions, where women learners are engaged by both empowering systems of knowledge and socio-religious limitations.

Higher education in Pakistan has consistently provided women with both opportunities and challenges: opportunities for greater intellectual and professional independence, but challenges from the broader society in the conservative regions of Pakistan, such as Narowal (7). The University of Narowal, with its mixture of progressive academic thought and traditional society norms, provides an interesting opportunity to explore how young women deal with the clash between feminism and Islamic teachings. Is Islam fundamentally patriarchal as some argue? Or, does Islam offer a form of empowerment? How do they balance family and societal expectations with their interest in higher

education and a career? In what ways has the university helped them to develop a sense of agency and understanding of gender roles in Islam?

Objectives

1. To explore the ways female students and faculty at the University of Narowal engage with Islam as it relates to gender equality
2. To examine the role of higher education in developing women's attitudes and beliefs towards faith and feminism
3. To investigate the challenges women encounter in pursuing education and career ambitions in a conservative socio-religious context
4. To analyze the University of Narowal's institutional engagements and campus culture on gender equality
5. To contribute to the larger field of research on Islamic feminism and women's empowerment in Pakistan.

Review of Literature

Islamic Feminism: Theological Reinterpretations and Activism

Contemporary Islamic scholarship has taken various positions on whether Islam is compatible with gender equality. On one side, Amina Wadud⁵ and Asma Barlas⁴, Islamic feminists, argue that the Qur'an speaks of spiritual and ethical equality between men and women. They endorse *ijtihad* (available independent reasoning) to reinterpret patriarchal exegesis of the Qur'an and bring back the egalitarian spirit of the Qur'an. Wadud's re-reading of Surah Al-Nisa and Barlas' critique of androcentric Hadith narrations have arguably laid the groundwork for a theology of liberation for Muslim women. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) declared, *"Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim, male and female"* (7).

Islamic feminism was established as an approach to challenge both conservative interpretations that seek to position women as subordinate to men and Western feminist paradigms. Numerous feminist scholars contend that many of the patriarchal practices wrongly associated with Islam should be viewed as cultural norms and customs rather than Islamic precepts (4). Badran¹ notes that Islamic feminism is focused on invoking an equal ethos of Islam using contextually relevant, gender-sensitive interpretations. Furthermore, Wadud's⁵ content with early Islamic history provides strong examples of female agency and leadership that contradict current patriarchal standards. This area of work makes clear that Islamic gender equity can be achieved alongside a religious identity.

Women played prominent parts in early Islamic history, showing that they could be empowered by knowledge, and that it was acceptable for them to be empowered through religious knowledge. Hazrat Aisha (RA) is famous as one of the leading scholars of her time, narrating over 2,000 Hadiths and teaching many generations of males and females. Hazrat Khadijah, the first convert to Islam, a

Socio-Islamic Perspectives on Gender Equality: A Case Study of Women, Faith, and Feminism at the University of Narowal

successful business person, represents possibly the best example of spiritual faith and economic independence. The possibilities for women's empowerment look a lot different than the narratives society often tells us about the limitations of women's progress as being legitimate because of religious beliefs (4).

In the context of Pakistan, Islamic Feminism allows for a re-framing of women's rights and advancement depending on an Islamic worldview. Shaheed's⁸ work illustrates that gendered politics in Pakistan are reliant on religious identity, which leads to complications in feminist activism in Pakistan. Pakistani women interpret and negotiate their rights in a range of discursive contexts that connect them to secular feminism to faith-based advocacy. Such dynamics are paramount to local contexts with respect to gender equality.

2. Role of Higher Education in Women's Empowerment

Education in Pakistan presents a battleground for gender equality. Notably, Hussain⁸ shows that female literacy rates in Punjab (which incorporates Narowal) is lesser than that of men (62% to 75%) because of socio-religious norms that prioritize women's domestic roles among students and future professionals. In contrast, Jamal⁶ conveys that educated women embrace educational pursuits for a religious justification, specifically performing gender work through religious discourse, including hadith like "To seek knowledge is the duty of every Muslim." As Kandiyoti⁹ suggests, age and the university space often serve as a site of competing gender ideologies. In conservative spaces, female students arguably have more restrictions on mobility, dress, and interaction amongst men (10). Nevertheless, Khurshid¹¹ found in her study of Punjab University that education provides critical consciousness, which many women utilize to begin interrogating patriarchal norms even while being conscious that they are devout Muslim women.

Higher education provides critical space for women's intellectual growth and empowerment, particularly in conservative societies (12). Education not only provides knowledge and skills, but also opportunities for critical engagement with social and religious boundaries. In Pakistan, studies have indicated that educated women are more likely to critique and challenge patriarchal practices including the denial of their basic rights, and do so within their religious context (13). Higher education exposes individuals to multiple worldviews and complex ideas, and can encourage women to reinterpret what faith means to them, which can be empowering for women seeking to align feminism with Islam.

In addition, Bano¹² quotes female Islamic education movements in Pakistan, which have begun to re-democratize religious knowledge that enables women to engage with Islamic scholarship more. These additional interpretations of Islam have implications for developing gender-sensitive interpretations and the inclusion of women in society.

3. Faith and Feminism: Lived Experiences of Pakistani Women

Qualitative studies present a more nuanced account of the interplay of faith and feminism. For example, Khan¹⁴ interviewed 50 educated Pakistani women, most of whom distanced themselves from the label "feminist" because of the aura of "the Western idea" attached to it, even as they supported gender equitable readings of Qur'anic text. Riaz¹⁵ found that female students in Karachi predominantly used Islamic terms such as "musawat" (equality) when making demands for women's rights and chose to avoid terms associated with secular feminism.

However, patriarchal structures remain in place regardless of women's professional and educational choices. Offline, Bibi¹⁶ described how even educated women embraced the norms of mehr (dowry) and obedience, indicating the hegemonic power of traditionalist readings. Complicating the issue of religiously- and culturally-influenced patriarchal authority is understanding how class and rurality impact women's empowerment. According to Zubair's¹⁷ study on women in Punjab, rural women found that their educational and career development enjoyed stricter policing by their parents and other family/community members than urban women.

But of course, patriarchy persists. Bibi¹⁶ suggests that even educated women can internalize norms of mehr (dowry) and submission in the name of preserving family honor and protecting their right to remain wed to their husbands. Zubair¹⁷ has established patriarchal authority is compounded by class and rurality when she writes that women in rural Punjab tend to face stricter surveillance on their choices, educational or professional options compared to women living in urban centres.

While education, and the ideology of Islamic feminism, could be institutions of feminist equity, conservative settings present formidable barriers to women being engaged in educational, training, and professional contexts. The mainstream expectations of women as mothers, wives and family caretakers, and the intangible political or social pressures from family expectations, and their immediate geographic location differently constrains women in conservative contexts from gaining equitable access to education (18). In rural settings, the more limited educational and economic resources also restrict women's capacity to secure training or professions while observing family or cultural expectations for women (19).

Furthermore, the structural divide between the genders, and persistent inequities in campus supports can still challenge women's pre-enrolment commitments to pursue or continue post-secondary education, learning or employment (13). Finally, each of these problematic conditions results in other external pressures that need to be examined to the extent that every institution of higher education

Socio-Islamic Perspectives on Gender Equality: A Case Study of Women, Faith, and Feminism at the University of Narowal

openly discusses institutional policies and campus culture can either enhance the equity and equality of women's education or work against this significantly.

4. Institutional Policies and Campus Culture

Pakistan's higher education institutions often mirror the prevalent gender biases in the wider society. A study by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in 2020 stated that, despite some increase in female faculty in Punjab's public universities, only 22% of faculty were women, and that even fewer women occupied faculty positions in rural institution (20). In addition, since the 2010 Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, institutions have inconsistently implemented policies such as anti-harassment committees (18).

Co-educational universities confront additional challenges. Saigol¹⁰ discusses how female students are discouraged from taking leadership roles and public speaking classes on conservative campuses, emphasizing the nature of the gendered hierarchy. On the opposite end of the spectrum, more progressive universities such as Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), have active feminist societies that incorporate Islamic and secular discourses (13).

Higher education institutions not only teach, but also establish contexts that enable greater gender equity. Institutional harassment policies, gender composition policies, and institutional policies concerning whether women have access to resources are some of the most central factors that impact women's education experiences (21). It has been suggested that Pakistani universities differ widely in their approaches to gender equity, with some adopting more progressive policies, and some being more constrained to traditional gender roles (22).

At the University of Narowal, understanding such policies and the campus culture is necessary to help contextualize women's experiences, as well as identify areas for change. Campus environments that are inclusive and support a sense of empowerment with female students and faculty are important factors for promoting gender equity with complex socio-religious dimensions.

Methodology

In the present study data was collected from the 10 female students of university of Narowal. Tool for data collection was in-depth interviews.

Thematic Analysis

Theme	Sub-Themes	Description / Interpretation	Quotes
1. Interpretation of Islamic Teachings on Gender Equality	a) Quranic egalitarian principles	Participants stress that Islam is a way that fights for justice and believes in equality and that patriarchy is simply cultural, not religious.	"Islam teaches respect for women; the Quran clearly supports equality."

Theme	Sub-Themes	Description / Interpretation	Quotes
	b) Rejection of patriarchal interpretations	Many reject some of the male centric perspectives viewed as representative of beliefs, as being a misappropriation of the scripture.	“Men have misread verses to keep women oppressed, but that is not Islam.”
2. Role of Higher Education	a) Empowerment through knowledge	Education gives women tools to scrutinize their religious practices, as well as redefine them.	“University taught me to question old beliefs and understand true Islam.”
	b) Exposure to feminist ideas	Building relationships with our faculty and peers exposes them to different feminist perspectives that they are able to reconcile with their faith.	“Here, we learn that feminism and Islam can go hand in hand.”
3. Socio-Religious Challenges	a) Family and community pressure	Participants face resistance from family and community members regarding education and work.	“My family worries if I study too much, fearing I’ll lose ‘modesty.’”
	b) Gender segregation and mobility limits	Cultural codes of behaviour limits either movement and participation in public life.	“Sometimes, it’s hard to attend events because of conservative views.”
4. Institutional Environment	a) Campus policies and support	The university acts as a factor, whether positive or negative, in regards to supporting or limiting women's access to opportunities.	“We need stronger policies against harassment and more women’s spaces.”
	b) Representation and leadership	Motivation for women is impacted when there are few females in positions of leadership and mentorship on campus.	“Few women hold senior positions here, which can be discouraging.”
5. Faith and	a) Reconciling	Women articulate going	“I am a Muslim and a

*Socio-Islamic Perspectives on Gender Equality: A Case Study of
Women, Faith, and Feminism at the University of Narowal*

Theme	Sub-Themes	Description / Interpretation	Quotes
Feminism Integration	religious identity and feminism	through a negotiation process between their faith and their feminist beliefs, wherein they feel that they gain a hybrid identity.	feminist; these identities do not conflict.”
	b) Advocacy for socio-Islamic gender justice	Participants expressed aspirations for a society that is gender equal but rooted in the principles of Islam.	“Change must come from within the religion, not against it.”

Interpretation of Thematic Analysis Table

The thematic analyses indicate the ways in which female students and faculty at the University of Narowal negotiate the intersections of Islam, gender equality, and feminism in a conservative socio-religious context.

Theme 1: Interpretation of Islamic Teachings on Gender Equality

All participants expressed a strong belief that justice and gender equality is fundamentally part of Islam - this claim is supported by Quranic principles that emphasize women's rights and dignity as part of being human. By promoting Islam as a faith that supports equality, participants made a distinction between Islam as an equal faith and patriarchal embodiments of Islam that limited women's rights. This distinction reinforces women's critical awareness of the difference between religious doctrine and cultures of religious practices, validating the claims of Islamic feminism that oppressive gender practices are based on social constructions not religious constructs.

Theme 2: Role of Higher Education

Higher education has proven to be an important and empowering factor, where women were able to engage critically with religious texts and question the patriarchal narratives. The university context actively introduced participants to feminist informed ways of thinking that they reconciling their faith with, illuminating that, overall, education allows participants to expand their view and expand their confidence to be advocates for gender equality. Education shows its productive potential to reshape gender norms within conservative contexts.

Theme 3: Socio-Religious Challenges

While education can demonstrate to the empowerment potential of women, participants in the study are confronted with strong socio-cultural expectations that challenge their academic and career aspirations, including the weight of family obligations and pressures, and societies limitations on their mobility and access to the educational resources that foster long-term empowerment goals.

Gender segregation and mobility limitations reveal strong and continuing conservative values that stop women from participating publicly with socially expected roles as employees, community volunteers, and/or citizens. Returned to space for reflection, the study participants faced considerable tensions between gender-role expectations and their individual goals of autonomy and equality.

Theme 4: Institutional Environment

The institutional policies of the university and the culture of the campus continue to impact women. The participants discussed wanting more support mechanisms, such as better harassment policies and a better pipeline of women in leadership positions. Women's motivation can suffer when supportive institutional policies are lacking and the diminished capacity to benefit from educational experiences dwindles, revealing potential areas for the university to improve in regard to gender inclusion.

Theme 5: Faith and Feminism Integration

Women in the study actively construct their identities as both Muslims and feminists, and rejected the idea that those labels are incompatible. Rather, they adopt a hybrid socio-Islamic feminist identity and wish to promote gender justice anchored on Islamic values. This represents part of a larger emerging discourse that situates women's empowerment within a religious lens in order to provide women and men culturally rooted paths towards gender equality in Pakistan.

Discussion

Through thematic analysis of women's experiences at the University of Narowal, we are able to see some important considerations surrounding how socio-Islamic understandings are formulated, particularly in relation to gender equality and women's rights in the context of conservative Pakistan. The findings resonate fully with and contribute to current scholarship on Islamic feminism, education, and socio-religious difficulties experienced by women.

In particular, the understandings of participants regarding the principle of equality is consistent with Barlas⁴ and Wadud's⁵ arguments, that cultural patriarchal norms and practices are not religious norms, and that it is possible to separate between Islam, and what patriarchal readings have created as normative or dominant in society. This separation of Islam, versus the patriarchal understandings is important to Islamic feminism, which seeks to reclaim religious texts in a women-based lens to reflect gender justice (1). The participants' rejection of the male-centered readings is an important realization, as it represents an ongoing contestation of religious authority in relation to women's connection to their faith. Shaheed¹⁰, highlights these themes of gendered politics in Pakistan, as do the women's rejections of traditional, known male-centering constructions with their own. The findings show that the women at the University of Narowal are

Socio-Islamic Perspectives on Gender Equality: A Case Study of Women, Faith, and Feminism at the University of Narowal

proactively engaged in religious re-interpretation, and are positioned to be active agents of change in their faith tradition.

The university context represents a powerful space for empowerment, establishing a space for critical reflection and exposure to feminist ideas. Consistent with Bano's (2017) findings on only female Islamic education movements, education acts as a site for intellectual freedom and gender awareness. The participants' realization that feminism is complementary to Islam contrasts with the dominant narratives that position feminism as being anti-Islam (13). This reinforces the position that education can facilitate women's ability to negotiate their religious and feminist identity, and enhances women's ability to confront patriarchal systems.

Despite the empowering aspects of education, socio-cultural barriers persist. Family and community pressures, alongside restrictions on mobility, illustrate larger trends described in rural Pakistani settings (17,18). Such barriers illustrate a persistence of tension between women's aspirations and conservative level social norms that endorse traditional gender roles. The findings highlight the necessity for addressing not only accessibility of education, but also the cultural attitudes that inhibit women's agency.

The analysis demonstrates how women's experiences are shaped by university policies and the surrounding campus culture. The solicitations for stronger policies and proactive anti-harassment protocols, and increased female representation reflect Hussain and Naveed's²¹ findings on gender equity within Pakistani universities. In addition, Shah et al.²² find that institutional support is crucial for transforming spaces into where education can be fully inclusive. This suggests that in addition to changing curricula, broader structural and cultural change within the university is required to support women's empowerment and equity in educational contexts.

The participants' awareness of negotiating their religious identity and feminism affirms a socio-Islamic feminist discourse which reconciles faith and gender justice (4,6). This demonstrates how integrating Islamic components alongside feminist sentiments can begin to dismantle the continued framing of Islam and feminism as separate, resulting in a culturally relevant lens for empowerment. The dichotomy reflects the emergence of hybrid identities which speak to the transformative power of suggested localized feminist interpretations in Muslim contexts, and are aligned with Shaheed's⁸ call to contextualized gender activism.

Conclusion

This research offers valuable insights into how female students at the University of Narowal negotiate and relate their faith and feminist identities from their positioning that is often classified as socio-religiously conservative. The research also shows that women embody Islam through lenses prioritizing justice, equality,

respect for self and others, anti-violence, and other similar principles, thereby confronting the patriarchal misinterpretations and cultural distortions that have historically marginalized and oppressed them. This emphasis in the women's interpretation of Islam is consistent with existing Islamic feminist literature arguing for the reclamation of religious texts as a means of advancing gender justice (4,5).

Higher education emerges as an important site for advancing empowerment through education, equipping women with the intellectual tools to analyse critically religiously inscribed doctrines, and assessing social impositions, norms, and traditions. Through their educational experiences, participants reconciled feminist thought with Islamic tenets and ideologies, suggesting faith and feminism can and do coexist, entering into authentic partnerships (1). This reconciliation process served to establish a socio-Islamic feminist identity informed and situated in and by local cultural and religious contexts.

Though these empowering aspects of women's education, employment and agency were present, there were socio-cultural limits too. Family pressure and communities that are centered on a conservative mode of life hinder women's educational and labor possibilities more generally and mirror the broader social landscape in rural Pakistan (8). Civil and institutional limits such as weak policies against harassment and the near absence of women in senior leadership bunks, limit universities' ability to advance gender equality (13). That said, the women's agency and commitment to religion and feminism provides potential areas for changing socio-cultural conditions.

The university presents broad opportunities for creating spaces that support gender justice through policy or cultural activities. In conclusion, this research provides useful local perspectives to global conversations around Islamic feminism and women's agency and empowerment, and shows that endeavors for gender equality based on religious understandings can be socially transformative and culturally appropriate in societies with Muslim practices like Pakistan.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

References

1. Badran, Margot, *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2009).
2. Zia, Afiya Shehrbano, *Faith and Feminism in Pakistan: Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2018).
3. Wadud, Amina, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
4. Barlas, Asma, *"Believing Women" in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

Socio-Islamic Perspectives on Gender Equality: A Case Study of Women, Faith, and Feminism at the University of Narowal

5. Wadud, Amina, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006).
6. Jamal, Amina, *Jamaat-e-Islami Women in Pakistan: Vanguard of a New Modernity?* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2016).
7. Hussain, Neha, *Women, Education, and Empowerment in Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2021).
8. Shaheed, Farida, "Contested Identities: Gendered Politics, Gendered Religion in Pakistan," *Third World Quarterly* 31, no. 6 (2010): 851–867.
9. Kandiyoti, Deniz, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender & Society* 2, no. 3 (1991): 274–290.
10. Saigol, Rubina, *Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan* (Lahore: ASR Publications, 2016).
11. Khurshid, Ayesha, "Islamic Piety and Feminist Politics in Pakistani Universities," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 50, no. 2 (2018): 311–328.
12. Bano, Masooda, *Female Empowerment Activities: The Re-Democratization of Islamic Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
13. Khan, Rabia, and Samina Awan, "Women and Higher Education in Pakistan: Barriers and Opportunities," *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies* 5, no. 1 (2017): 89–98.
14. Khan, Shahid, "Feminism as a Dirty Word: Muslim Women's Activism in Pakistan," *Signs* 42, no. 4 (2017): 873–894.
15. Riaz, Saqib, *Faith and Agency: Women's Activism in Karachi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).
16. Bibi, Farzana, "Negotiating Patriarchy: Educated Women in Rural Punjab," *Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies* 8, 33–50.
17. Zubair, Muhammad, "Rural-Urban Divides in Women's Higher Education in Punjab," *Journal of South Asian Development* 16, no. 1 (2021): 78–95.
18. Ali, Sana, "Gender and Academia in Pakistan: Barriers to Women's Leadership," *Journal of Women's Studies* 12, no. 3.
19. Rehman, Faiza, and Sabiha Iqbal, "Socio-Cultural Challenges to Women's Education in Rural Pakistan," *Asian Social Science* 12, no. 7 (2016): 112–121.
20. Higher Education Commission (HEC), *Gender Disparities in Pakistani Higher Education* (Islamabad: Higher Education Commission, 2020).
21. Hussain, Shahid, and Arshad Naveed, "Gender Equity Policies in Pakistani Universities: Challenges and Prospects," *Pakistan Women's Studies* 9, no. 1 (2016): 45–60.
22. Shah, Nazira, Khawar Abbas, and Rahim Ahmad, "Campus Culture and Gender Inclusivity: A Study of Pakistani Universities," *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 42, no. 5 (2020): 475–490.