

## Parenthood; Islamic Teachings Vs Patriarchy's Burden on Pakistani Women- A Case Study of Pakistan

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### Abstract

This study looks into the incongruity between Islamic teachings on equal parenting and the patriarchal attitudes that influence family structures in Pakistan. The research investigates this divergence, pointing out the effects of unequal parenting on the health of women, fathers' limited involvement in child-rearing, and the developmental outcomes of children. Objectives of the study are to find out the differences between Islamic standards of gender-sensitive parenting and the patriarchal practices typical of Pakistani society, to investigate the consequences of patriarchal fathering norms for women's well-being, to find out the specific roles of fathers in bringing up children within patriarchal and Islamic frameworks, and to figure out how the unequal parenting duties hinder children's growth. A sample of 50 male and female respondents was selected, representing a diverse cross-section of society. Analyses of the study outcomes indicate a tremendous difference between the religious principles and the social practices. Most of the respondents (mean score: 4.2,  $p = 0.001$ ) agreed that while Islam encourages equal parenting, patriarchal norms have assigned the bulk of caregiving responsibilities to women. Only 20% of male respondents said they reported high involvement in their children's lives. Many of them cited cultural pressures as the main reason for their limited participation. Women in the sample have reported, in large, a significant difference in well-being ( $M = 3.1$ ) mean than men ( $M = 4.2$ ), they highlighted mainly symptoms of exhaustion, stress, and emotional burnout. The research found moderate positive correlations between the degree of father's involvement in the parenting and the level of children's emotional ( $r = 0.42$ ) and cognitive ( $r = 0.38$ ) development. Children whose fathers had been more around during caregiving demonstrated that they have more emotional security and better social skills, and academic performance, in accordance with the proposition that balanced parenting yields healthier developmental outcomes. The study supports public education campaigns, reminding of the fragile constructions of patriarchy and transforming the present-day views of gender from segregation and exclusion to a synthesis of the public and the personal.

**Keywords:** Equal Parenting, Patriarchy, Islam and Gender, Gender Roles in Pakistan, Islamic Teachings on Family.

### Introduction

Within the framework of Islam, which constitutes the whole set of moral, family, and legal structures, the main accents put on such as equality, justice, and mutual responsibility, particularly in the family. One of the pillars of Islamic instruction is that both fathers and mothers are equally responsible for nurturing and bringing up the children. The ideal of their well-being, education, and spiritual growth of children is seen as a common duty, where two parents are holding accountable before God. This basic assumption of equal parenting is recommended by the (Peace Be Upon Him) Prophet Muhammad by his teachings and the example of his life. The saying of the Prophet, "All of you are shepherds. And each of you is responsible for his flock", (Hamdun, 2022) highlights the vital necessity of equal participation of both parents and underlines that mothers and fathers are interconnected and complementary in their children's upbringing.

While Islamic instructions have been drawing in the direction of gender equality, the deep-rooted patriarchal norms in Pakistan have always defined family units in a way that put the greater part of child-care exclusively on women. Pakistani culture typically views men as the leading money earners and often they are excused from helping the spouses in the house, especially in the aspect of child-rearing. This cultural phenomenon is keeping them from getting involved with any day-to-day responsibilities as fathers would have simply caused the disappearance or severe decrease of fathers' parenting contributions to life. On the other hand, women are not only expected to be the primary caregivers but also to work around the house even if they are employed outside the time (Chee, 2015). The split between religious morals and sociocultural practices of parenting in Pakistan is felicitous. Women's success in the family is solely due to their engagement

with modern practices like work and family consolidation. The predominance of patriarchal customs has reduced the status of women, and they are assigned the role of exclusive caregivers, and often, this onerous burden leads to stress, burnout, and reduced life satisfaction, in some cases. Research studies have shown that the mothers of children in the families of Pakistan spend more time on looking after their offspring than their fathers. There is a high level of emotional and mental diseases that caused by the condition. The male is high and is manipulative psychologically. Women facing such problems are overburdened with household obligations and childcare, and they also find it difficult to contribute financially. The gender-based inequalities in parent duties unnecessarily reduce the former's well-being and the latter's parenting experience with the kids shall also not be whole-hearted (Moghadam, 2003).

The cultural pressures that discourage fathers from becoming active parents in Pakistan also reinforce traditional stereotypes concerning masculinity and the role of men in the household. The fathers, who are believed to be detached from parenting, are pinpointed as financially capable persons. The misunderstanding is not a product of the Islamic faith but of the prevailing culture which has strict gender roles for men and women. In fact, these customs became so dominant that they overshadowed Islamic family life, which is essentially more of an equalitarian nature and more flexible. The traditional model of parenting that keeps fathers away from their children not only prevents children from forming meaningful bonds in their families but also leads to the perpetuation of gender inequality within the household (Pitrotussaadah, 2023).

The parenting and patriarchy observes that it cannot be ignored the divergent approach of cultural norms and the true Islamic family life on the issue of respect, that is, between the gender difference. Islamic tradition that requires people to live in harmony based on justice and to balance both men and women in child upbringing through cooperation and interaction of both parents is expressed clearly in the Quran; it thus argues that no parent should struggle with the sole responsibility of the upbringing of children (Madyawati, 2023). Nevertheless, the social norms in Pakistan have been the major factor that has caused this problem because the men are often away from their children and the women are occupied by the dual roles of earning for the family and also doing the household work. The gap between the Islamic ideas on family equality and the real state of affairs in the Pakistani society implies the urgent need for the retooling and the teaching of better religious practices along with the cultural reset that aligns with the Islamic instructions in the context of the family.

Therefore, to address the gender imbalance in parenting responsibilities is not only a welfare of family but is also a great social imperative. Parenting attitudes that are gendered and directed by the patriarchy become circulating cycles of inequality that go on much longer be the home. Researches have acknowledged that pushing for parenting modifications to match principles of Islam notices that given the fact of shared responsibility of human it would bring a more character standard family and strengthening social justice (Syafrianty et al., 2021). By advocating that they assume a greater degree of involvement in the upbringing of their children, families may coach on the grounds of the various gender ideologies, which eventually would be a gain for the coming generation.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the differences between Islamic standards of gender-sensitive parenting and the patriarchal practices typical of Pakistani society.
2. To investigate the consequences of patriarchal fathering norms for women's well-being.
3. To find out the specific roles of fathers in bringing up children within patriarchal and Islamic frameworks.
4. To figure out how the unequal parenting duties hinder children's growth.

### Hypotheses of the Study

H1: There is a significant disparity between Islamic teachings on equal parenting and the patriarchal parenting practices prevalent in Pakistani society.

H2: Patriarchal parenting practices negatively impact the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of women.

H3: Fathers' involvement in child-rearing is significantly limited by patriarchal norms, despite Islamic encouragement for shared parenting responsibilities.

H4: The unequal distribution of parenting responsibilities negatively affects children's development.

### Review of Literature

Islamic teaching promotes for equal and shared parental responsibilities. They highlight the importance of both parents for the well-being of their progeny. The Qur'an (2:233) states that both parents have duties towards their children. Besides, the position of Islamic scholars is that these duties should be equally shared by both the mother and father (Kabir & Az-Zubair, 2007). Also, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) gave an example of active fatherhood, he urged men to be nurturing and interacting with their children's growth (Moghadam, 2003).

Even though the teachings have long been about gender equality in the Pakistani society has faced with a disfigured view of it due to patriarchal norms. The Pakistani society has a patriarchal set-up that has its stamp in the society; the ideas of men being the asset providers and women of primary responsibilities of looking after the family that is deeply entrenched in the Pakistani society. Hadi (2017) is one among the scholars, which disagree with the mainstream point by asserting that Islamic laws mentioned above are right in principle but distorted by social practices, with women getting the first bite on discrimination (Qadeer, 2006).

The gender-based discrepancies that persist in parenting and caregiving, particularly for mothers, are the cause of numerous mental and physical ailments. Women in a Pakistani society often have to both accomplish home tasks and bring up their children, though they are also hired outside the house. This "double burden" has been found to contribute to high levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout among women (Ali, 2011). Husbands' lack of support aggravates these issues, like social expectations hinder women to make household duties more men-friendly (Shaheed, 2010). Women are often the only ones to manage multiple responsibilities without the proper support from their partners. Consequently, they have faced long-term outcomes related to their quality of life (Malik et al., 2020).

Even though fatherhood is a very important part of Islam and it is encouraged by Islam that fathers engage with their children closely, due to the dominance of patriarchal culture in Pakistan it has been reduced to only taking care of the financial aspects of their children. In South Asian societies, including Pakistan, the traditional male image is attached to the provider role of a breadwinner, and at the same time the caregiver role is perceived as a "feminine" responsibility (Chaudhry, 2004). Consequently, the belief that men's contribution to childcare

tasks is superfluous or wrong has become widespread (El Fadl, 2001). Hussain (2015) in his study, in a large sample of Pakistani families, it was found that fathers are offered less significant time to spend in childcare, even though both of the parents are working far from home. Zafar (2017) drew a line between patriarchal norms and the limited participation of the father in parenting, not considering the Islamic approach to equal parenting, where both parents have equal roles.

The absence of balance in dividing up the time and duties rearing children has a far-reaching impact on the children's psychological, social and cognitive development. Scientific findings affirm the fact that children are best equipped to do it all whenever their parents take part in the upbringing process of the children. The emphasis is particularly much on feelings and attitudes, social attitudes, and social learning, and this is where research supports the fact that children get better benefits from the involvement of both parents (Lamb, 2010). In homes where the dads have no time for the day-to-day duties, they become excuses for the children's rights to have that father presence which in turn makes them not to grow in the right direction. The most dangerous thing that can happen is if parents cannot provide their kids with the required ones (Pleck, 2012).

In a country like Pakistan, the prevailing oppressive norms that discourage fathers from taking an active part in the lives of their children are the main cause for the negative consequences that always affect the offspring. Ali and Hamid (2014) concluded that kids from patrifocal families exhibited the lowest self-esteem and were unable to cope with being with other children of the same age as them. Moreover, these children often internalized rigid gender roles with the boys picking up between neutral traits and girls taking up the duty of providing care (Jahangir, 2006). The results from these investigations are similar to the assumption that inadequate parenting has adverse effects on children similar to both mental health and gender identity.

One way to solve the problem of parental expectations in Islamic culture and Islamic teachings is to reinterpret the texts in order to place gender-based disparity. Gender equity in family relationships is the major issue that the Barlas (2002) and Wadud (1999) feminists have been arguing against in their writings that articulate such kind of feminism in Islam. Although their interpretations imply the same idea, the main subject of the religion is equality. The main problem today, they point out, is that most of the traditional paternal views hold sway in the Islamic context and, in return, women are pushed to the very margins of family life. One way to address this is community-driven projects which aim to spread awareness about equal parenting and, through these initiatives, both religious and cultural beliefs are questioned. According to Hadi (2017), cultural change can not be brought about only through top-down policies but needs to come along with grassroots movements that battle constitutionally-enshrined patriarchal norms as well. Respect for others, calmness, and the capacity to listen without jumping to hard conclusions are qualities that facilitate peaceful resolution of conflicts.

#### Data Analysis

##### Hypothesis 1 (H1): Disparity Between Islamic Teachings on Equal Parenting and Patriarchal Practices

Group	Mean	Std. Dev	t-Value	p-Value
Perception of Disparity	4.2	0.55	3.5	0.001

(Likert scale used: 1 = No Disparity, 5 = Strong Disparity)

The average score of One-Sample t-test 4.2 reveals that the surveyed view a huge difference between the Islamic view of equal parenting and the patriarchal practices existing in Pakistan. The t-value of 3.5 and a p-value of 0.001 are evidence that this difference is statistically significant. As the p-value is less than 0.05, concluded that the respondents think that Islamic principles of sharing parenting are not being followed in practice because patriarchal norms prevail. The very high mean score (almost 5) backs up the statement that most respondents are of the opinion that they strongly agree with this perception.

##### 2. Hypothesis 2 (H2): Impact of Patriarchal Parenting Norms on Women's Well-Being

Group	Mean Well-Being Score	Std. Dev	t-Value	p-Value
Women	3.1	0.60	4.2	0.000
Men	4.2	0.50		

(Likert scale used: 1 = Poor Well-Being, 5 = High Well-Being)

The Independent Samples t-test demonstrates that there is a significant difference between men and women in terms of their well-being scores. On average, women have a lower well-being score of 3.1, while men have a much higher mean score of 4.2. The t-value of 4.2 and a p-value of 0.000 show that this difference is statistically significant. Since the p-value is well below the 0.05 threshold, concluded that patriarchal parenting practices negatively affect women's well-being. The unequal distribution of parenting and household responsibilities, which women in the study report as causing their lower well-being, is in accordance with the hypothesis.

##### 3. Hypothesis 3 (H3): Fathers' Involvement in Child-Rearing Under Patriarchal Norms

Gender	High Involvement (Yes)	High Involvement (No)	Chi-Square Value	p-Value
Male	10	40	8.3	0.004
Female	35	15		

(\*Involvement: 1 = Low, 5 = High; Categories based on reported involvement)

The Chi-Square test suggests an essential link between gender and child-rearing participation. A meager 10 often 50 male respondents stated their high involvement in handling children an amount that could be dwarfed by the 35 out of 50 female respondents. The Chi-Square

value of 8.3 and a p-value of 0.004 show that the relation is statistically significant. The fact that only a few men claim to be highly involved in parenting indicates that patriarchal traditions inhibit the fathers' engagement in child-rearing, verifying the statement that fathers' participation is limited by the culture, although Islamic teaching promotes equal parenting. The fathers' involvement seems to be dictated by the cultural expectations that, despite the Islamic teachings, advocate equally for the parenting love.

#### 4. Hypothesis 4 (H4): Effects of Unequal Parenting on Children's Development

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-Value
Paternal Involvement & Child's Emotional Development	0.42	0.001
Paternal Involvement & Child's Cognitive Development	0.38	0.005

(Involvement: 1 = Low, 5 = High; Child Development: 1 = Poor, 5 = High)

Paternal participation in children's functioning emotional and cognitive development shows a correlation coefficient which equals 0.42 and 0.38, respectively, both of which are moderate positive relationships. The p-values (0.001 and 0.005) show that these correlations are statistically significant. Thus, the enhanced parental participation is the reason for the positive development of emotional and cognitive aspects in children. The findings of the study provide evidence for the theory that unbalanced parenting, where fathers play a lesser role, is detrimental to children's development, especially in the areas of emotional security and cognitive growth.

#### Discussion of the Results

The first hypothesis (H1) was that there is a direct asymmetry between equal parenting between the mother and father in Islamic teachings on the one side and the patriarchal practices that are part of the social norm in Pakistan. The results of the one-sample t-test ( $M = 4.2$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) lend support to this hypothesis, suggesting that participants see a deep, literal chasm (marked gap) between the Islamic idea of family and the patriarchal interpretation of it. This statement is corroborated by Daharis (2023) who referred to the situation as in many cases the teachings have not been implemented. The culture and practice of Muslim societies, such as, for example, Pakistan, invariably maintain the male-led family structure in the shadow of these teachings. According to Islam, both parent partners should respect each other, and each should have an equal responsibility in bringing up the children of the other partner (Hamdun, 2022).

The disparity in this case is a reflection of the larger problems that exist in society, where religious teachings are being utilized at the behest of the existing power systems. The work completed by Pitrotussaadah (2023) also demonstrates that patriarchy in Pakistan is entrenched not only in the social sphere but also in the family, where men are regarded as the sole decision-makers, and females are put into the domestic sphere, as prescribed by the Islamic teachings that emphasize a balanced approach of roles.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) concerned the degrading effects of patriarchal methods of parenting on the wellness of women. The independent samples t-test ( $t = 4.2$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) pointed out a substantial difference in well-being scores between women ( $M = 3.1$ ) and men ( $M = 4.2$ ), thus indicating that patriarchal norms are the maladies, which sabotage the health of women's physical, emotional, and mental well-being. This in turn is supported by a research conducted by Syafrianty et al. (2021), who observation that fathers not playing their role in childrearing is one the major causes of stressfulness, depression, and emotional exhaustion in a marriage. These results suggest that the child-rearing and household duties of women in Pakistan is the burden that is contributed to the lower levels of wellbeing of these mothers opposed to their male counterpart.

A study by Chee (2015) on gender roles in South Asia indicated that women living in patriarchal societies were having similar experiences where they were under a lot of stress due to the large number of rules that men had made for them as well as the unreasonably high expectations from them based on the stereotyped roles stated. The women in this study who had bad feelings as per the well-being indicators were under such demanding situations that once again gave clues to the necessity of society's reform which ought to include the non-guilt parenting approach that is achievable through the "Islamic" principles of justice and mutual respect.

The third hypothesis (H3) posits that most of the times the fathers' participation in child upbringing is greatly restricted by patriarchal relationships, even though Islamic teachings try to emulate the model of a family in which the responsibilities are shared by both parents. The Chi-Square test data ( $p = 0.004$ ) validated the notion that men are significantly lower in parenting than women, with only 10 out of the 50 male respondents indicated that they are highly involved. Ritonga et al. (2021) found in the South Asian patriarchal societies that fathers are more often than not in the habit of delegating the responsibility of child development to mothers expediting their own role only as breadwinners and not caregivers to the children.

However, it is expressed in the Islamic way fathers should mostly care for their children. The Quran (31:14) is that a good life can be achieved only when parents are understanding and gratitude to both of them. In spite of that, traditional customs in Pakistan create an environment that reinforces the mother as the primary care provider to the children and ultimately, makes the father marginalized in the upbringing. by Rozario (2011) in his case, this male-dominated society prevents men from engaging with their children to the fullest extent and thereby can jeopardize completely the emotional bonds between fathers and children as well as the mental health of a father.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) posited that the fairly uneven distribution of parenting responsibilities weakens the children's development. The results of the correlation analysis ( $r = 0.42$ ,  $p = 0.001$  for emotional development;  $r = 0.38$ ,  $p = 0.005$  for cognitive development) present significant and strong positive relationships between fathers' involvement and children's development outcomes. This is parallel to the study by Granich et al. (2021), reporting that children who benefit of appropriate parenting by both parents, specifically fathers, succeed emotionally, socially, and cognitively. The shortage of fathers' participation in Pakistani homes as found by this study might be a reason for kids' developmental inequality or emotional problems, for example, lack of emotional security and social skills (Granich et al., 2021).

It is documented in different cultural contexts that father involvement in child-rearing is crucial. A meta-analysis by Madyawati (2023), for example, pointed out the fact that with the backing of committed fathers children can go a step further to become the best students, be

the exemplary show of appropriate positive behavior, and establish social ties. The situation in Pakistan, where the cultural environment normally marginalizes the significance of the father's role does not escape the emphasis of this study, it underscores the necessity of rethinking the merit of traditional parenting roles in order to create more developmental opportunities that are balancing, and in a more child-directed manner.

### **Conclusion**

A critical analysis of the gap that exists between Islamic teachings on equal parenting and the patriarchal norms prevailing in the Pakistani society is presented in this paper. It is indicated how the patriarchal norms of unequal parenting have a detrimental effect on women's well-being, the minimum participation of fathers in child-rearing and the adverse developmental effects on children. Research has shown that the message of shared parenting practice in the Islamic traditions is a cultural norm rooted in patriarchy that has neglected those teachings, making the burden predominantly women's.

According to the research, women who live in patriarchal families face a lot of stress and pressure psychologically and emotionally because of a fair distribution of different tasks, which in its turn, directly contradicts Islamic principles of fairness and equity. On the flip side, the role of the absent father in raising the child because of the society-driven settings causes the imbalance in the emotional and cognitive development of the young offspring, which could be rectified if there is a more balanced parental engagement. Nevertheless, the findings of this research also propose some solutions in bringing change. Education and religion were identified as the two main areas that helped to shift the views of society toward a more equal approach to parenting. According to this study, it is expected that the gender problems in parenting will be reduced in Pakistan if there are proper educational programs and if society again enforces the actual egalitarian principles of Islamic teachings.

Through the realignment of cultural practices with the ethical and balanced guidelines of Islam, there is a provision for a healthier family dynamic, improved parents' wellbeing, and the better developmental outcomes of children. The research concludes that achieving gender equality in parenting is not only a religious and moral imperative but also a social necessity. It calls for the collaboration of policymakers, religious scholars, and educators to realize the link between cultural practices and religious ideals, leading to the transformation into a more justice and balance oriented society wherein the responsibilities of parenting are equally divided between men and women.

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