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BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING: PARTICIPATION OF PAKISTANI SIKHS ETHNIC GROUP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

The glass ceiling is an intangible blockage that refrains certain action in a specified manner. The phenomenon is normally associated with women/vulnerable groups. This study aims to find out the process for Sikh youth in Pakistan, who made their way to higher education. The research evaluates the process that delayed the achievement. This qualitative study has collected the successful cases of breaking the glass ceiling; along with the situational analysis of their background. Data collection was based on interviews from Sikhs who went through the process personally. The findings reveal the actual reasoning and barriers for not pursuing or quitting education at a higher level. The subjects are interviewed in-depth about their actual dealings and experiences to the setup. The hindrances are not same for all but collectively it makes a glass ceiling that easily affects everyone living in this specific setup. Sikhs in Pakistan have a limited number of graduates/professionals as compared to their population. This study by putting the factual situations on the front, also provide numerous solutions for government, educational institutions, and policymakers. The interviews are interpreted through a subjective assessment which aids the process of phenomenological study and authorizes information to be collected through the application of a range of strategies. Subjective exploration is inductive while interpretive data is more of illustrative and analyzed to the conically narrowed downing process up to the level of saturation. The semi-structured in-depth interview questions were being updated with time and need according to the analysis results of the responses.
Keywords: Glass Ceiling, Semi-Structured Interviews, Sikh Ethnic Group, Qualitative Study, Higher Education

1. INTRODUCTION

"Breaking the glass ceiling" is a gender-based phenomenon (Britton and Williams, 2000) referring to the case studies which states the ground scenario of educating the youth of Sikh ethnic group in Pakistan, who experienced a set of matching barriers in getting higher education including the all other possible intervening supportive or discouraging objectives. The expression glass ceiling is widely used for women and minorities. The current study represents the barrier to reaching a higher level of education. In the 1980s the term glass ceiling was introduced (Hymowitz and Schellhardt, 1986) for the barriers that were faced by the women and minorities to move up in their professional career, to have access to higher education as well as higher position. So, it's an artificial, unseen barrier,

discrimination line for those who could not reach or break barriers that represent the gender and racial discriminations (Jackson, O'Callaghan, and Leon, 2014). It is important to consider the social function of the university than its intellectual function. Whereas, (Yang, Schneller, and Roche, 2015) argued over the skills and abilities to increase the number of youth and also that there should be an arrangement of equal opportunities for their learning and its utilization because it's not just the learning or getting it there are effects as well that influence the society. According to Shah (2006), Pakistani society has full-time careers for women like taking care of children and household to support their husbands. In the name of honor or the insubstantial dignity, men do not allow women of their family to work in the mannish environment. Many parents do not allow them to go for co-education. According to the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission Report (Redwood, 1995) educational set up in Pakistan is currently not so friendly and equally accessible, which is promoting a barrier for vulnerable groups of society. Furthermore, if women and minorities make their way to the field there are fewer opportunities provided to them with strong competition and criticism (Lyness and Terrazas, 2006). There also lies a sense of insecurity in the fellow colleagues who are uncomfortable to work under the supervision of women or minority which basically is a representation of manly stereotype behavior that always prevails in masculine-societies. Ironically, media has also played a vital role in shaping certain ideologies regarding minorities in Pakistan and India (Bukhari, 2018), which has also paved a way in shaping the mindset of masses. This study examines the situation and determines the possibilities to improve the situation and empower the Sikh youth in the higher education system of Pakistan. To build the ground for registering realities, to provide gender-based equal opportunities and to enable them for getting on to the way of progress, this study is to act as a basic draft for futuristic policymakers.

2. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE
This research intends to explore the existence and concept of a glass ceiling for Sikh ethnic group in the field of higher education in Pakistan. As it is widely cited that glass ceiling refers to the position one wants to achieve yet he/she is deprived of reaching to the point due to some discriminatory effect. The purpose to evaluate the impact of such invisible obstacles is to find whether the existence of glass ceiling is the prime cause for the minimal representation of Sikh men and women at top managerial and administrative positions in Pakistan followed by representation in higher education. It also includes the reasoning for lack of interests and least access to educational grounds. The hurdles that affect the decision-making process of Sikh youth while moving through the educational period of life. So far it includes the effective reasoning for gender-sensitive behavioral roles of Sikh youth and its influence on community, society, country and its economy at a larger perspective. This research will help us to highlight the actual hindrance and will suggest possible solutions to overcome. Through which it would be possible to create maximum opportunities for Sikh ethnic groups and especially its female members by discouraging the perception of a glass ceiling.

3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND DATA COLLECTION
3.1. The Qualitative Research Modal and Epistemological Position
Keeping in view the decision-making process for participation in higher education and extraction of non-generalized and situational

personal experiences of youth from Sikh ethnic group the positivist approach is rejected by the nature of this study. As this phenomenon is not being studied in one single arrangement, also the social reality is not always same and cannot be generalized, it changes through the time and space (Neuman, 2000; Econ, 2012). Individual's social interactions and its experiences with the dependent outcomes purely fall into the interpretive setup of research (Mason, 2002) current study is also conducted in specific patterns. This procedure agrees upon the construction of the social world and its practices are established by its people. It is considered that the perceptions of these people and their understandings attach the meanings to the reality in which the researcher is interested (Bryman, 2001). Consequently, the philosophical position (ontology and epistemology), methods and procedures of collecting the field data and its analyses are to be driven from the developments of the meaning of each individual that differs from person to person and varies in the construction of meaning-making. The study is focused on the subjective results of the individuals of the Pakistani Sikh ethnic group whose experiences are purely constructed of their lived experiences. This study focuses on their realities; the researcher seeks for the personal statements of the respondents in this specific setting. The respondents who practiced and been through the decision-making process for participation in higher education degree. The researcher is interested in the experiences of those who dared to take entry into higher education.

3.2. The Research Design

Since the study investigates the Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Participation of Pakistani Sikh Ethnic Group in Higher Education in Pakistan, Subjective research inside a phenomenological hypothetical system was fitting. Subjective assessment is considered as the most appropriate setting to process phenomenological study and authorizes for mining of rich information to be collected through the application of a range of strategies. Subjective exploration is inductive while interpretive data is more of illustrative and analyzed to the conically narrowed downing process up to the level of saturation. In this study setting researcher adopted semi-structured in-depth interviews with an open questionnaire that was being updated with time and need according to the analysis results of the responses (Tolich and Davidson, 2011) whereas data accumulation and its analyses were processed at the same time. For this purpose, semi-structured set of meetings was arranged according to the situation while considering a powerful research technique for finding the deepest parts of individuals' lives and depicting their understanding rather than speculation and generalization (Mutch, 2005). To accomplish high-quality exploration, legitimacy, reliability; morals are completely considered along informal investigation without getting into an uncomfortable position. As indicated by (Mutch, 2005), subjective examination goes for investigating to getting into their shoes (Tolich and Davidson, 2011). This type of study enables the researcher to elaborate on the complex world of the respondents by understandings from their revelation (Burns, 2000). Phenomenology supports the idea of direct linkage to the experiences that are to be studied or examined. In this setting, the researcher has the chance to understand the phenomenon not just by listening to what the respondent shares but he can examine the physical and nonverbal responses and can totally relate it to what is being heard (Cohen, Morrison, and Manion, 2007).

3.3. Data Sources and Sampling Strategy

The respondents of this study consisted of the educated young individuals irrespective of gender, belonging to the Sikh ethnic group, who shattered the glass and made their way to the higher education. As this study consists of the lived-experiences of such individuals and also could be seen as an analysis of different cases because the sample was driven keeping in view the different circumstances demographically.

Gender-sensitive and unbiased selection of sample for data collection was proffered to make the sample size more assorted and for a variety of realities due to gender differences. Respondents group consisting of five (5) male and five (5) females is included whereas no she-male or any other gender was witnessed during the whole field work that could fulfill the criteria to be nominated as a sample. Researcher himself visited the respondents and arranged meetings in and comfortable setting for respondents and interviewed many up to the level of saturation (Robson, 2002). However, keeping the complexity of the situation in mind researcher kept interviewing and pulling out additional information. It also took more time due to the availability of a scattered set of respondents who fit the eligibility criteria of the study.

3.4. The In-Depth Semi-Structured Interviews

Since the researcher is in quest of getting the point of view in a conclusive form or in tiny detail the semi-structured meeting is considered most effective (Berry, 1999). It has enabled to develop the semi-prepared questionnaire guide to get the full information according to the experiences of the respondent. In this regard, the measured but not calculated and fixed part of this study was semi-organized meetings. An arrangement of the open-ended investigations (Mutch, 2005), which let the respondents to wisely respond. It also let them express from the depth of their understanding and their developed meanings for their own reality. Conclusively the meeting was set but not the content. Respondent was chosen but the response wasn't, it was all left to discover. At every step of the research process in the qualitative study, the researcher needs to arrange himself according to the context of knowledge construction (Malterud, 2001). Reflexivity is a commonly practices phenomenon of qualitative research methodology (Pillow, 2003). It allows the researcher to understand how his own background, perception, actions, and values affect the data collection process and it analyses (Parahoo, 2014) in addition (Lambert, McSherry, and Jomeen, 2010) suggested reflexivity as a method of the understanding phenomenon under elaboration and strategy to perceptive meaning-making by the participants.

Data collection process and analysis of collected data were going on side by side. As supervised by the mentor it was recommended to explore the new dimension. Thematic analysis technique was used for this purpose the coding of themes was developed to put the data by different respondents under the most suitable and appropriate theme under discussion (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis is an appropriate way to evaluate and elaborate on the ethnographic interviews (Aronson, 1995). The data is described more efficiently and detailed under mutual in-depth heads as compare to just organizing and describing the data (Clarke & Braun, 2006). Coding of the themes was set according to the phenomenon and raw data from the transcript of interviews, the codes were both theory-driven and data-driven fulfilling the process of analytical selection and justifying the phenomenon (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To record in anonymity male respondents are coded with the alphabet "M" and female with letter "W" in their title. Considering the sensitivity of topic and personal reservations of the respondents and their fear of being nominated for the subject pushed the use of anonymity. The places of living for the Sikh community are limited and well known there for the total anonymity is observed appropriate for the best possible results and safety of respondents. During the field work, the ethical framework was used as mandatory and researcher left the field physically but kept them in confidence and stood connected for future concerns that resulted very productive.

4.1. Limited Personal Resources for Education
4.1.1. Lack of Education Support Structure

The backward mentality is the key barrier when it comes to educational resources. People are less supportive towards education and they have a common slogan – start earning and get married. This is one of the many reasons for early or child marriages. The reason behind this lies in the illiteracy, and rural brought up prevailing in the older members of the community. As they themselves haven't enjoyed the perks of being educated, they are mostly unaware of its importance in this educated and progressed world now. So it gets really tough for the successors if something is not being supported by their predecessors. It also develops culture and generates customs from a different perspective. But on the other hand, some cases have also been discovered with opposite perception. Educational importance is evident from some cases where children's education is promoted and appreciated. One of the male respondents "MA" shared his experience by saying that except his parents, every member of his family especially the older ones opposed the idea of education due to which it doesn't remain a piece of cake to acquire education. He shared that he had to strive hard not to get an education but to gain acceptance within the community and hold an opinion

He added

"It is not like that they reject or exclude you from family or otherwise don't allow you to enter their houses. Educated person doesn't mean an enemy or terrorist but their mentality about you don't allow you to set in. one is being considered an outsider, the one who cannot understand them and fit into their way of thinking."

Education is considered as wastage of time as getting married is the foremost obligation to perform. In some cases, they say it could slow the process of life if someone keeps studying the marriage and other things may leave behind. Respondent "MB" added:

"It is more important to raise children than to get some wisdom. I am used to listening to the wisdom tip, that once you get married you will get to learn to live."

And another important factor is the cultural events to participate in, household training for girls of course, while inter-community social brought up is more stressed when it comes to the secret of a better living.

Another female Respondent "FW" added that she conclusively heard throughout in this regard by everyone and by everyone she meant to include some of her age fellow girls.

"She is wasting her time, she doesn't have to worry about anything, and she doesn't know anything. How could she until she has children to grow and I heard much more of this kind."

This traditional upbringing is preferred over modern exposure. Those who chose a path of enlightenment, are apparently on a path of

alienation, as they are not much liked by the members of the community, not valued (with respect to community affairs and important matters associated) have to face a sense of deprivation. One of the Representative "MD" concluded that it may be is because of their absence in free time gossips. As they spent more time reading and studying while others are free to gather. The respondent also added:

> "I feel that there should be study circles in the community, even for the religious study. According to my gossiping and backbiting in gatherings lead to greater gathering *Jirga* every couple of weeks. (He smiled) … I learned this during a training workshop, about study circle and conflicts."

4.1.2. Lesser Interest for Female Education

Females face stronger non supportive attitude. A female of Sikh ethnic community faces the same gender issues as faced by the other women in Pakistan as a whole and a special benefit of being a minority in enough to add miseries.

A female Respondent "FW" while sharing her barriers and referring to the common ideology of the community towards female education:

> "…What is the need of getting an education when you are destined to get married and raise children…."

Said respondent "HW":

> "My mother didn't stop me from studying neither she supported it, her idea was that I can study but not to take it as a career………. It was obvious that she stood by my side for getting some education but as a child's wish not for the interest of education."

The society does not accept working women and there are many hurdles in their lives. Although women work more but in a different capacity, most of the time the work isn't paid, they are actually the helping hand for the bread earner. Almost all the female respondents and some male respondents agreed that women are under the pressure of gender discrimination for not working professionally but working at home. A respondent "IW" added:

> "I am not made for pleasing world as an individual I have wishes I should have choices……I was often asked to not waste time on education because ultimately I will have to cook and feed the children."

Another ideology told by "FW", she had to listen again and again.

> "Our women don't go for job and it depends upon the other house (in laws to be) If they allow...and who allow their daughter in laws to go for work instead of managing their household."

"MC" shared while expressing his views about gender discrimination regarding education in his community:

> "My sisters never got a chance to get to a college while I was sent to the city for higher education."

He further concluded:

> "I feel sorry for them, for their femininity, as they have to suffer for this. Femininity demands sacrifice in our society and our society has a reservation in case of girls."

4.2. Internal Displacement

Sikhs usually live forming a community within a bunch of houses in the city or area. Sikh community is also characterized as living in the form of groups within a specific territory. Moreover, they prefer forming a habitat near *Gurdwara* (the sacred place to worship).

4.2.1. Belongings to a Colonial Residential System

Especially in Pakistan; community is living in kind of colonial or a group residential system where some houses live nearby to each other in a city or town around historical *Gurdwara* or otherwise they built one with the support of local community. So moving out and forming a diverted path for one is not acceptable. It is preferred to live by the community rules; those who dare to move out cannot fetch much peace in their lives. Sikhism directs for daily morning and evening prayer and the regular visit of *Gurdwara* Sahib that's all what defines the rest of their lives if they take a side from the community. This aspect of the Sikh colonial system produces great hurdles in the way of getting higher education as many remain deprived of it because of their inability to mobilize social or economic factors. Now those living in rural areas would not be able to move to the cities as this will distant them from their colonial setup and they would be exploiting the "norms".

4.2.2. Displacement due to Recent Migrations

The forced migrations taking place within Pakistan over the past few years has been a major issue for the youth of the Sikh community. The migrations mostly triggered by vulnerable situations including earthquakes, Army operations, kidnapping and forced conversions in the tribal area of khayber Pakhtunkwah (KPK) and internal Sindh are creating the worst situation in education scenario. This is a condemnable act that affects the lives of a number of people including the Sikh community. Pakistanis are brave and stand for themselves in any situation like the nation did not accept the defeat at army public school Peshawar incident but on the other hand, such miserable situations and conditions leave the marks and a threat to life. Another cause of displacement is target killing of Sikh families in tribal areas of Pakistan, from where a lot of people migrated to Punjab province and many of their children clogged their education in between, which very less are likely to continue.

> "One of our cousins was killed in his shop in a busy market of Peshawar by terrorists for no big reason but the demand for money. My father decided with my uncles that we should move to a safe place now…. Earlier he uses to chant slogans of his hometown, that surprised us (family and others attached he meant), said "MB"."

The forced displacements are most likely to affect the life of a student psychologically and generally, schedule activities related to education sector greatly suffer when a student misses a class even for a day.

Respondent "EM" when asked about the experience, expressed:

> "Dear to be very honest with you I personally don't like it here. I feel uncomfortable and usually, things get awkward……. any kind of things can't stick to one."

Another respondent "MA" expressed:

> "It is easy to say go with the flow, but hard to be done. Same goes with the education when you are forced to move to a new place. Nothing remains with the flow, not even the accents…It's hard to absorb and takes time…Years."

The educational year is missed out or wasted as sudden displacement creates chaos. Getting admission at a new place in another institute and match the aptitude could be a greater problem. While the earthquakes and certain calamities demolished the educational resources which on other hand are again a barrier for education seeker living in remote northern areas.

One of the displaced respondent "FW" shared experience:
"Everything was so new when we moved, New place, new educational system, hard to understand, and difficult to pick. I also skipped a year due to documentation issues. So did my younger sister, they took her in the previous class she studied 3rd level for twice once here (currently living) and once in our town (the town from they moved)."

4.2.3. Total Isolation
Displacements result in isolation. Especially, Sikh communities where members live in the form of colonial clusters and hold identical appearance. Displacements pull them away from their habitat, leaving them in a state of isolation and not only displacements but moving to some other city or country to pursue higher studies also makes certain disturbances in their social lives.
"I miss being with the people sharing my culture and traditions…. I feel emotionally captured in my own self now", said respondent "MC"."
A female responded "GW", one who experienced migration.
"After displacement, the sense of minority amplifies as you become detached from the people having the same religious beliefs."
"MA" responded:
"I felt great difficulty in finding a sound place to worship, thus performing religious obligations becomes tough in a new place…….. I didn't see Gurdwara for weeks during my stay at the university hostel."
Respondent "DM" expressed about isolation:
"Religious isolation is the biggest problem I faced after leaving my residential community for the sake of higher studies. I felt difficulty in reaching out Gurdwara and see familiar faces…people around me ended up having a conflict about religious offerings of prayers some were very interested two of my friends often visit Gurdwara with me on holidays and had Langer (free food)."
Respondent "HW" shared her sentiments.
"Family plays a positive role in keeping you close to your religious beliefs and ideology."
Social isolation is a very important feature. This largely influence one's behavior shared "IW":
"I felt socially deprived when after classes no one remains there to talk with. I felt socially unacceptable when people isolated me on religious grounds the worst was when no one understood me regarding my point of view and not even tried, surprisingly people don't feel this… I wish to have met liberals in my educational period they are nonreligious and more open I guess."
Statements of disappointment were shared by the respondent in connection with the isolation perspective; this also was observed as fear of individuals in the advanced social world.

4.3. Parental Reservations
Parental reservations fuel more into the already prevailing hurdles in the education sector for Sikh youth in Pakistan. As far as their reservations are concerned it is as normal as any other parent would have in the country but in case of Sikh parents there lies a fear of being a minority.

4.3.1. Restriction for Girls

The most vulnerable species who immediately fall prey to the parental reservations is "her". The girls being the "honor" of the family have to face the most restricted scenario the moment she decides to trail her aim.

"Developing an aim is way too easy then to go for it and what stops you is mostly your family," said "JW". Not my but every parent here I think is worried for the daughters and first thing come in their mind is what others will say."

"HW" a female respondent quoted her parents.

"What would the people say? We can't let you go alone to some other city for education. There would be wrong perceptions."

Another respondent "IW" shared her opinion of being minority girl.

"Being a religious minority adds more to the problems of girls as there are more reservations because of that, isn't it enough for reservations to be a girl in northern Pakistan, here I am a girl and a minority. I guess I fought for twice (chuckles). No I am not afraid, I was earlier but now I am proud, she added."

"DM" One of the male respondents explained.

"Because of different distinct religious identity, a minor one too; my parents were always scared when I was studying in university in another city that kept me disturbed me all the time I wonder female student suffer double in this case, when they have to carry the tag of family's respect and pride in this patriarchal society."

4.3.2. Fear of Conversion

Unlike all other religions, Sikh community is more open to followers of other religions and hardly hold offensive perceptions. But at the same time, they feel more insecure on the religious ground when they have to face the direct responses due to their physical appearance. While living in a religiously diverse society where there is no sign of similar natives, kids can be either misguided or became a victim of manipulation. "DM" expressed:

"Their (parents) fear is for their children is right, I got offers to convert and I still do, often and unexpected. One of my good friends visit me at my office after year we met, as I shared with him that I result awaiting for a professional course, I got an offer in response. He said that I am doing so good and successful but if I convert and accept Islam so I would defiantly pass that exam, he bet. I felt suffocated the very moment and learned that this was not limited to educational career but also haunts in professional life."

Respondent "MB" said:

"My parents feel more insecure towards religious aspects, they know that I am firm at my faith but as forced conversions are always there in state and our religion is among the minorities."

4.3.3. General Threat of Loss

General threat of losing family is always on parents' mind especially when it comes to the protection of their children. Boys and girls are equally vulnerable in this aspect both.

"My parents feared of my company, I would go in wrong hands; they have this constant fear in their minds, it normal in every middle class typically traditional family', told "DM"."

"JW" respondent told with a chuckle about the fear of her parents.

"I am a girl; someone would hurt me. You see I am beautiful that's what adds to the fear."

According to reported incidents, there are so many cases of girls being victimized by frustrated men just for not being accessed. And in university life, if some girl is beautiful she is approached by almost everyone for getting in contact with, in these scenarios girl is more likely to be verbally abused, emotionally tortured and teased. Many girls mocked of such acts accept defeat and even try suicide.

A female respondent "GW" shared:

"I was told in the hostel by girls, that I am so beautiful I should be one of them I don't belong to nonbelievers and one girl said *kafirs* are beautiful to give tough time to us, our males."

Fear exist both among parents and their children. Some respondents agreed that they usually avoid sharing their worries with parents to avoid any barrier to their education. It would create a terrible situation filled with doubts and worries for their parents. Respondent "DM" shared his experience.

"he thing which my parents disliked most about me, was when I used to go out with my friends, they panicked if I would be involved in some undue activities along with my friends."

"MA" explained:

"They feared more about with who I am rather than where I am they had no issues if they knew the person and they didn't get negative vibes. One thing that I have been told so many times when I am outside and whenever I left home is that my family's honor is in my hands, and I must not leave the rope to the faith and stay connected to it."

All these parental reservations result in lack of confidence and insecurity in the children. They are more likely to be under pressure and lose control to argue over their rights.

As "DM" thoroughly shared that:

"I was talented, I use to perform in different activities, people were jealous too, every time doing something extra ordinary, I had to listen that if I am Indian or an Indian agent... I once yelled at group fellows that stop calling me an Agent, it is not a joke if anything happened to me or any one doubted I will blame you and damages are on you… I was afraid of it that scared me out; I even brought in to the Dean's notice. Who knows what happens and I am held for nothing but jokes and doubts."

4.4. Effects on Religious Life of Student
4.4.1. Religious Discrimination

Discrimination on the basis of religion creates various issues. Almost all the respondents admitted that this posed a hindrance for all. One of the respondents positively accepted it as a reason to live "EM" shared:

Oh this is what I live for, you see if people haven't discriminated me I wouldn't have made it till here. I stopped responding and I don't know when I accepted it as normal, I can argue but I don't want to anymore, it will not affect them but me. Why to be worried for such a thing which is one sided and biased. No religion is bad it is its followers who are lost.

The biased behavior on religious grounds is not so smooth to bear as another Respondent "MC" told the researcher:

"It's true about the group politics and all in university life, you just come to know latter. I felt discriminated on very first day and after that and so on. It never stops, someone in some way

will remind you that you don't belong here just because you are different and not of their religion."

"HW" female respondent expressed:

"Yes everywhere, not all the time but everywhere, even from the people you daily see, and it affects deeply, I almost thought to quit but luckily I got a support group… studies are affected obviously so is professional life."

Respondent "IW" argued that it comes from the society and the mentality and the space we create while sharing an incident:

"In starting days of my college in Pakistan studies class something terrible happened, Teacher while delivering lecture started blaming Non-Muslims in extremist and false statements. He dints see me and probably wasn't aware of me being Sikh, when he spoke against Sikh one of class fellows just said that there is a Sikh in our class as well. At that moment his voice shrieked at once and grown pale, the very moment he started covering up and in last he said No Sikhs are not that bad they are Brave nation, Hindus are worst and I was talking about them."

4.4.2. Non Acceptance at Public Places

Direct refusal, denial or negative responses can also affect and be a barrier in the career building. Almost all of this is experienced by the respondents volunteered for this study.

"EM" respondent told:

"Normally no one bothers but once I was in a market to buy some solution book, in search of book when we entered in a shop my friend silently directed me to a notice on which it was clearly mentioned in *Urdu* that "we don't deal with Non-Muslim", the moment we look into each other we laughed at that shopkeeper's mentality, me and my muslin friend quietly stepped out and dint deal with him. He might never know that what happened but honestly I felt humiliated and it hurt me at the same time I felt sorry for the mindset, I wondered if the books are Hindu, or Sikh or Muslim. No books are books for knowledge."

Respondents shared different experiences. "MA" told us the way he was not accepted at hostels by forced groups and was forced to not cross through the gate of mosque.

"In my view its wrong, I always felt like when the time would come and I will be out of the sight of these people who threatened me to change my walk way just because I am not a Muslim and I pass through the mosque to reach my room."

"MC" told us:

"I was denied access to an institutions' annual event, apparently invite was open for all universities in Pakistan but it was clearly mentioned on it that non-Muslims are not allowed. Though all my team goes only I could not make it, they performed without me. The incident was center of fun for some but for me a lifetime memory."

Another problem comes up in form of eating out. Practicing Sikhs are religiously vegetarian are not allowed to eat out as meat is not allowed in any case. In these circumstances it is very difficult to live out and manage when every kitchen item is associated with non-vegetarian products. The menu for hostels mess is fixed and contains almost non-vegetarian items including beef as witnessed by respondents.   "IW" told:

"The public kitchen or common cooking is not for us, we have our different traditional food that people usually

don't cook. I am pure vegetarian I don't and can't eat in cafeteria or canteen. They use chicken even add it in vegetables, eggs in breakfast and such items are not allowed to me according to my belief."

"FW" added:

"People don't know about it and sometimes they just pretend on a table I opened up that I can't have this *biryani* as it contains chicken, one of the class fellow said just take the chicken piece out and have it, I was unable to do so, so I explained them why it is not possible."

"HW" added:

"And in hostel I was cooking *daal* in common kitchen it was almost ready and I was totally hungry because I had nothing in whole day. Just then a girl played me she put some chicken cubes in my dish by claiming that she was adding tastes to it. Though I knew that they planned in group to tease me, they also made fun of me later on and I was helpless. I couldn't eat and was not able to cook again. I slept without eating and felt very bad for long. I can't explain what I felt."

It is observed that situations and circumstances are unfavorable in case of Sikh individuals when they move from one place to another for the sake of higher education.

4.4.3. Non Availability Worship Places

For any non-Muslim it is very much different to live in Pakistan than a Muslim because the worship places are limited in number. This leads to a fear for both parents and student which causes a big hurdle in their way. Non availability of worship places affects the religious life of students while they are living away from their houses and have to deal with people from other religion.

"GW" in this regards shared that:

"In our institute there are mosques in almost every wing but not even a single Gurdawara, I agree that we are not in number so that a Gurdwara should be established but there must be at least a dedicated room for worship."

4.5. General Reservations of Students
4.5.1. Anonymous Hate Speech and Behavior Faced

Hate speech and harsh behaviors leads to the emotionally pressurized situation where without doing anything one becomes a direct victim. The respondents registered their reservation for not sharing the incidents word to word but ultimately the researcher was able to fetch the facts from some of them in detail and in summarized form from others.

"MC" shared:

"They made fun of me when I joined university, in very initial days I came to know that I was known with a funny name they kept after me and not just that jokes were associated with me just because I was not one of them."

Respondent EM shared:

"Bullying by specific groups when passing by alone was normal day routine, there are every type people who come to educational institutes, from different background and mindset. I got loved by many and hated at the same time, I was a special case may be, (he laughed). The memories still haunt me, I received hate notes on my bike, broken light and indicators of the same bike in parking, someone wrote "*kafir*" (urdu) on my door newly painted

in hostel room. I erased it and got it again with addition of
"*Kutta*" (Dog) erased it again and third time I ignored I could
not do much…..it was erased after some time by authorities but I
have marks and it will last. I was blunt and brave but got upset
and afraid after these circumstances."

4.5.2. Dawat e Islami and Forced Religious Conversion

Almost every respondent faced the pressure of conversion. The
other side of story says that they are being invited to the right path
by the people on the right path but ultimately that creates an
uncomfortable situation for the students of Sikh ethnic group.
EM said:

"Look Dear, how it isn't a mental pressure and a fear, that I am
forced and threatened and emotionally abused to change my
religion? I am uncomfortable of these invites because I am not
interested, I don't want this for me! Let me choose for myself
and don't interfere in my life. I always wanted to say but
couldn't that No matter for what you are doing this, it is
affecting me, my life. One should limit their actions."

The forced conversion and marriage of minority girls is a well
highlighted issue in Pakistan. "GW" informed that:

"My class fellows and relative quite university after her sister
was abducted and converted by a Muslim guy, the victim was minor
and still no one could do anything. They family was told that
they have no connection to the girl as she is converted. The
victim latter tried to suicide and her life become miserable.
Also my class fellow lost her future she was a shining girl and
a bright student."

"HW" another female respondent told:

"During university a boy continuously chased me on way and then
started dropping paper notes and started calling on my phone and
sent text messages when I dint respond calls, all he wanted me
to convert, he knew a lot about me. Some girl from the class was
helping and supporting her and they claimed it a cause, as per I
investigated. That was very tensed and uncomfortable; it
haunted me till I finished my course."

Another respondent "MB":

"I got many invites like that because I lived in hostel, it was
polite offensive and harsh as well. I cloud compete and had
better answers but I never argued and debated. Mostly I tried to
avoid the pressure and did not let it bother me because I knew
it's in vain to do so. Nothing would happen I would just create
problems for myself and invite harm."

4.5.3. Blasphemy Threat (Special Reference to Girls)

This being a very sensitive issue the respondents restricted
themselves to comment over it but still it stays as an issue and fear
in society when the law and order situation is out of control.

"MA" said:

"No one has any value, no one is protected, someone for personal
motives nominates you for the blasphemy and the mob attacks you
the next moment, I fear that it is going to the worse. If
someone is guilty he should be punished according to law."

"JW" said:

"We are threatened to be harmed this way, I was threatened by
one guy to fulfill his physical demands or otherwise he will
call on my parents and make problems for him and otherwise blame
me a sin a never did of think of doing. With the help of some

good souls and a teacher I escaped the situation but still can't get rid of that fear."

Almost each of them in their personal capacity agreed that if they want protection of their faith they must respects of others and they do. "MB" told:

"My faith do not allow me to disrespect any one or his faith, it is clearly mentioned in our religious code and we can't think of saying bad to any one because, GOD is one (he quoted from Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji) "Awal Allah Noor Upaya Qudrat k Sab Bandy."

4.5.4. Blackmailing

Blackmailing appears as another important problem to Sikh youth. Though it is a common problem of any girl leaving her house for study or work, she is threatened in many different ways to compromise.

"JW" female respondent told:

"Even if someone pranks my parent with a fake call or say anything compromising about my character that would create consequences and that is a problem for us girls."

"IW" told:

"No one is afraid of anyone saying anything but losing trust. People take advantage and blackmail girls like they will call their home, follow or chase them, will spread rumors about their character. Girls fear if that happens they will be forced by family to quit going out for education. In any case the penalty is on innocent whereas the offender misuses the situation…Everyone is aware of such situation, it is common scenario, and no parents can risk their pride or morality. The plus point is minorities are over sensitive in these matters."

4.6. Access, Opportunities and Facilities in Education Sector

Considering general education situation in Pakistan and the number students getting registered in higher education the educational institutes are not enough to meet the requirement. There are many going out of Pakistan for higher education just because of quality differences.

4.6.1. Career Counseling

According to the respondent's career counseling is another major facility that Pakistan is lacking in. According to a respondent it is as simple as shopping on plan to meet the needs according to fashion and culture and shopping just for personal satisfaction and out of jealousy driven by the attractions of what others are doing. Regardless the Sikh youth and other minority communities are in dire need of counseling fort for the education and second for what to study. The clear dimensions can lead to bright and fruitful future according to a respondent "MC":

"I never knew that the degree of making sculptor and designing ceramics exists otherwise I would never have proceeded in sciences, I always embarrassed of my thoughts latter on during studies I came to know that there is a whole arts institute and many other courses are taught, there was no one to guide me. Well what if guided, the other thought is may be parents would have allowed or not, because in our country being doctor is something."

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper contributes to the understanding of the process of developing the educated youth in a particular community. The study

relates to the individual case studies of Sikh youth. Since the higher education is the final stage for youth to jump into their professional career it is very much important for them to be aware of the hindrances they are going to face and to get ready for that. The barriers faced by the Sikh ethnic group include; limitation and lack of facilitation and some ethnographic issue that can be solved if dealt properly. The study found that there are not only barriers or hurdles by the outside world but there are reservations and limitation in the inner world of the subjects. The insider restrictions are still to be fixed even if the facilitation is provided. Some causes of abandoning higher education include the male dominated societal living not because of religion but due to demographic culture. The minor shifts in organizational, domestic and institutional policies in this very case can bring a huge positive change and that could be fruitful for both community and country at the same time. It has been indicated that support both from the government and educational institutions along with acceptance from family do have positive effects or have been helpful in achieving the goal or breaking the glass ceiling. Supportive and positive role of any of the mentioned above and significant others coupled can enhance the capacity that could lead to advance studies or career advancement in short.

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