

Review of: "[Commentary] Commentary on Sociocultural Beliefs and Systems Restricting Women's Access to their Marital Property Rights in Pakistan"

Roomi Aziz¹

¹ University of Essex

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper [Commentary on Sociocultural Beliefs and Systems Restricting Women's Access to their Marital Property Rights in Pakistan]. I found it very interesting and would like to suggest few edits/ comments/ recommendations to the author.

In the background section, I feel that the framing of Constitution 'allowing' women the right is a bit regressive. Protection of their legal and religious right would be more appropriate here, specially considering the subject of the commentary. It would also bode well to add some context on regional stance towards women's property rights, which is one of the main causative factors here, and will then build neatly towards the author's arguments for passive consumption of axiomatic knowledge around property ownership and rights for women.

Under the 'Parallel States of Cognitive Dissonance and Consonance', it is not very clear who 'they' are in the first sentence. Is this about contradiction in general Pakistanis' awareness and beliefs? If so, this can be elaborated more clearly. Also, references may be added where women were reported to be deprived of their marital property rights.

The sub-section 'Enculturation of Belief System' builds upon the lack of systematic pursuit of religious knowledge in the country, resulting in gap between what we perceive as religion, vs. what religion actually is. This section then sign-posts to the epistemological role of power. However, the commentary should also consider the elephant in the room, that it is not just the religion but also the regional cultural and historical beliefs that have contributed to the realities today, and are equally relevant as religious beliefs, if not more (referring to Jejeebhoy and Sathar's paper, already cited in this commentary). There are other papers documenting how culture and custom has taken over religious practices in case of property ownership of women in Pakistan. Please see <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2015.07.004>; <https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2016.1177633>

In addition to these societal prejudices, there are also structural challenges within the administration and governance, which makes it complicated for women to claim their rights. See <https://doi.org/10.52700/scir.v1i1.17>

In view of this feedback and suggestions, I am sure once the author has reviewed the commentary, the concluding recommendations will broaden, from just focussing on PAM model. Furthermore, as already mentioned by the author in the preceding section, the societal power dynamics have a much larger clout in this equation, compared to increased

awareness of women vis-à-vis their marital contracts or property provisions and rights. The commentary can benefit immensely from stronger and pragmatic bottom-up and top-down recommendations.

I would also recommend deletion of the PAM model and the build-up around empathy as there is little discussion or rationale of the same in the context and background (i.e. the commentary does not say anything about lack of empathy or understanding, whereas these experiences of power exploitation and rights deprivation are multi-generational in the region i.e. ample shared history, experience, emotions etc.), and little relevance in final conclusions and recommendations.