



Gender Self-efficacy, Perceptions and Mothers' Portrayal in Televised Polio Messages in Sindh, Pakistan

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Abstract- Television exposure is considered a pillar of origination for awareness and attitude change in health messages. However, Pakistani televised polio messages, are not yet successful in mapping out the root causes of cultural restrictions imposed by patriarchal social structure on mothers' contribution. Though mothers being the real caretakers of their children are oppressed from independent decision-making abilities for polio vaccination, particularly in Asian societies. Bandura (1999) discussed about gender roles and role of media in its social cognitive theory but did not identify the attitudes and perceptions of parents regarding health messages and its effects on parents' health decision making process. Bandura (1999) also did not explore the role of television in empowering mothers for taking health decisions for children. Hence, this research fills the gap by critically analysing the narratives of parents that depict mothers as marginalised segment of the society and discourages them as equal contributors in polio elimination process. The methodological formulation applies critical investigation of lower middle-class parents with the help of qualitative research framework through in-depth interviews. Nonrepresentation of homely fathers', mothers' objectified and suppressed positions, patriarchal superiority, unequal distribution of health decision-making and low confidence of mothers were identified as potent constituents in extension of theoretical perspective for self-efficacy and gender representation of Bandura's social cognitive theory (1999). Thus, in this manner, this research unfolds ideas for policymakers to redesign polio awareness campaigns in country for impartial gender representation in televised messages by considering the importance of mothers' empowerment in polio decision making process.

Keywords: Television Representation, Gender roles, Mothers' empowerment, Mothers' Portrayals, and gender self-efficacy

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

With the time passing by, television viewing has been increasing in Pakistan which have profound impact on its viewers. It is argued that television is used to serve variety of purposes and awareness is among one of its utmost important source of information. Shrum (2009) concluded that regular consumption of television viewing shape mind-sets of social realities. These self-constructs of social realities are the result of insufficient knowledge among people that influences on health disparity between rich and poor. Health structure in Pakistan is configured with inadequacy of resources, untrained staff and unsatisfied management. It has been stated that realistically, politicians are subjected to be the policy makers while health professionals are the ones who employ those policies (Ghafoor & Sheikh, 2016). Therefore, health in the country among people especially in rural and under developed areas has always been an inexplicable issue. Further, this issue has never gain its due significance and attention from the concerned authorities. This negligence of the Pakistani government towards health care has rendered outgrowth to several infectious diseases including polio.

Pakistan is battling with polio since three decades despite of the global eradication initiative launched in 1988 (Hussain et al., 2016). In the 21st century, where society is progressing in every field including medicine and technology, Pakistan is among the only three countries who instead of decreasing is out-bursting polio resulting in number of increased cases every year (Kanwal et al., 2016). It is considered that health communication in Pakistan has not been effectively used in the country for motivating public