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## Day Care Facilities in Public Girls Schools of Islamabad: Opinions of Mother Teachers

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### Abstract

This study explores mother teachers' opinion regarding the availability of daycare centers for the female workers of schools and focuses on the influence of such facilities on workers' performance. It also tries to explore those mothers' opinions who have to bring their kids to their workplace. This study also investigates condition of daycare center provided by female schools to their female workers in order to get genuine opinion of those mothers. Close ended questionnaire was prepared and distributed among 180 mother teachers in different public schools of capital city Islamabad. 160 questionnaires were received back. Data was collected by the researchers. This study brings into light the serious concerns of mother teachers regarding condition and maintenance of daycare center provided for their kids. It also highlights the non-availability of daycare centers in few schools where mothers have to leave their kids either at home or in some other daycare centers that charge high rates. It also reveals that if an institution provides its workers with their basic needs, they become loyal and devoted to add to the reputation of their institutions. The data analysis was quantitative and showed that despite the availability of daycare centers, most working mothers prefer to leave their kids at home than to leave them in daycare centres. It would also affect the performance of teachers due to the presence of daycare center for their kids within their range.

**Keywords:** Daycare, facilities and learning.

### Introduction

“Daycare center (DCC)” means the premises in which care is provided at any one time. Daycare is a place which suits working mothers who have no family support for keeping their children at home. Working mothers can easily manage their routine tasks due to this support by their organizations. Daycare center, which is the first requirement of a working mother and the first responsibility of concerned organization, is not provided to its employers. In such organization working mothers have to perform mental and physical work. Mental work means they have to keep thinking about their kids and have to perform their role which is expected of them.

Female has been treated as “an unpaid labour” (Tyson, 2006), a term coined by a critic Christine Delphy and is expected to continue her performance as she used to do earlier. In addition to being obedient, feminist critics also discuss the idea of restriction of woman within four walls of her father's house or her husband's house. Modern era has witnessed a tremendous increase in literacy rate of females. In Pakistan this trend has also conquered most of the typical minds of parents and forced them to educate their daughters for the wellbeing of their generations. Particularly the capital city Islamabad possesses a high rate of girl's literacy.

Furthermore, educated females instead of sitting at home prefer to utilize their gained knowledge for benefiting their fellows. Most preferred profession of educated females is teaching. When a female becomes working mother she adopts dual role to perform in her life. Whereas when a male becomes working father he is not bound to perform his role in upbringing of children except to earn bread and butter for them.

Many parents rely on daycare centers to care for their children while they work. While some parents may just consider a professional daycare center to be the safest option for babysitting, there are many benefits and functions of a daycare center. Children who attend daycare centers benefit from the wide variety of social and educational opportunities the center provides. Working mothers are mentally and physically engaged during their job hours. They have to take their younger kids with them to their working place. For proper care of their kids they need well maintained daycare centers and this is the major issue of working mothers. Because if they are not provided with daycare centers their performance will suffer which will consequently leave their students in suffering situation. This study focuses on the phenomenon of identity transformation of females with reference to the Pakistani community. Transformed identity of women added to her responsibilities and doubled her duties. Thus a need of special place for the look after of kids of empowered women became severe and the organizations felt need of providing mothers with daycare centers. This study further explores opinion of working mothers about daycare provided by their organization for their kids. It aims at highlighting the significance of daycare centers in the life of working mothers.

### **Research Objectives**

Objectives of this study were to:

- 1) Examine availability of daycare facilities in female schools in Islamabad Model Schools for Girls.
- 2) Analyze the condition and environment provided in daycare centers.

### **Delimitation**

This study was delimited to mother teachers working in Federal Government Schools situated in the area of capital city Islamabad.

### **Methodology**

This study was descriptive in nature. Questionnaire was prepared by the researcher with the help of literature review. This questionnaire was validated by three faculty members having PhD degree in Education. It was revised in the light of suggestions and instructions given by these

experts. It was finalized having 21 items in total. Questionnaire was then administered to 30 teachers to find its reliability. Its reliability was calculated as 0.724 Alpha. Survey method was used and questionnaires were distributed and collected by the researcher. Sample was selected through purposive sampling technique so to obtain accurate results in minimum available time. Furthermore, this helped in representing all female mother teachers in highlighting their concerns. The selected sample consisted of a total of 180 female teachers. Sample consisted of married teachers having kids who were brought to the schools where their mothers were teaching. 160 questionnaires were received back.

### **Literature review**

Woman has always been defined as wo of men for many past years and has never been assigned her identity as an individual. Society even today in this modernized world defines an individual on gender basis. Man is not in need of any person to be defined but when a woman is to be defined she always needs a male partner in order to get complete identity. As pointed out by Simon De Beauvoir (1949), “women have meaning only in relation to men”. She further expresses her views about female identity in following words “women are defined not just in terms of their difference from men, but in terms of their inadequacy in comparison to men”. (Tyson, 2006). Women needed some male individuals to be accepted as an honorable individual of her society. Woman has never been accepted as a person in her own right rather she is man’s Other. Woman has never been defined as what she actually is but given identity in accordance with the roles connected to her. She is not an individual she is actually daughter of her father, sister of a brother, wife of her husband and mother of her children.

### **Traditional Gender Roles for Women**

Women are not born feminine but they are conditioned to become feminine by patriarchy. Simon de Beauvoir a critic highlights that “one is not born a woman; one becomes one”. Females are conditioned by their society to behave in the way patriarchy wants from them. Delphy also pointed out that the females had long been considered as “nonworkers” (Tyson, 2006) who don’t deserve to be paid for their domestic labor. Despite efficient execution of domestic duties such an attitude of society towards females’ hard work indicates denial of female labor on men’s behalf. In a patriarchal society female stepping out of her work domain is not acceptable as it is against their socially constructed traditional role. With this step male dominated society created new obstacles for female in order to stop her from going against her traditional role. This reveals that the unpaid domestic labor if steps out would shake walls of the

socially constructed palace of patriarchy. In addition, might also damage the dominant image of males of society.

### **Education and Women**

An educated individual is the one who is well aware of the purpose of his/her life and is fully equipped with required competencies and capabilities to compete with the continuously evolving society. This acquisition of basic skills according to the Shaheen (2006) should not be based on gender discrimination. As pointed out in a report by Sivard (1988) that “whenever, women lack access to education, health care and economic opportunity, their children tend to be less educated.” Female education when became an international issue Government and society together felt the need of educating women in order to secure the upcoming generations. Both the factors collaboratively worked for the education of females and recent education policy of govt. of Pakistan increased literacy rate of females in Pakistan. But there are still some far flung areas which need to be focused by the government so as to eradicate any sign of discrimination in expansion of knowledge and education.

### **Obstacles Faced by Women**

The first and foremost hindrance created by the society to restrict female from becoming active member of her society is lack of family support especially for married females. Particularly those married females who also have become mothers faced problems regarding look after of their kids and their upbringing. Role of proper upbringing of kids has also been assigned to mothers in order to hinder her performance for the concerned institution. Christine Delphy also highlighted that “all contemporary “developed” societies depend on the unpaid labor of women for domestic services and child rearing” (Tyson, 2006). Nurturing is not a role assigned to males biologically but socially associated with males. Males have been conditioned to behave and act as the soul bread winners of their families according to some feminist writers. According to various authors (Virginia Woolf, Angela Carter, Atwood, Morrison) they can't tolerate substitution of their roles by females who struggle to earn for improving their living standard.

Another tool which although empowers a woman is used by the society to restrict woman from crossing the socially constructed boundaries of her house is her children. Woman has to face a great deal of pressure in order to get recruited for motherhood. All married women are made to feel that they are incomplete without becoming mothers and in this pressure females have to adopt another socially constructed role which is of mother. It seems that women had to bear a lot of pressure

from patriarchal society which never encouraged females to step out of their house and work to earn for their families. Women who used to stay within the boundaries of her house after becoming aware of her productive role for her society and country started her struggle as an active member of her society. As stated by Tyson (2005), “society used to keep women powerless by denying their right to educational and economical means of acquiring power”. This tool couldn't keep itself functional due to rapid expansion of information and technology. Working females are still dependent on society for the selection of profession for their future and have only two choices open for them. As mentioned by Dr. Zaki (1975) that “majority of teachers enter the profession not by choice but by compulsion of circumstances”. Females are compelled to become doctor or teacher because these two professions according to the society are respectable ones for women. In this way rule of society and patriarchy still exists in the life of women.

### **Services Offered by Organizations for Female Workers**

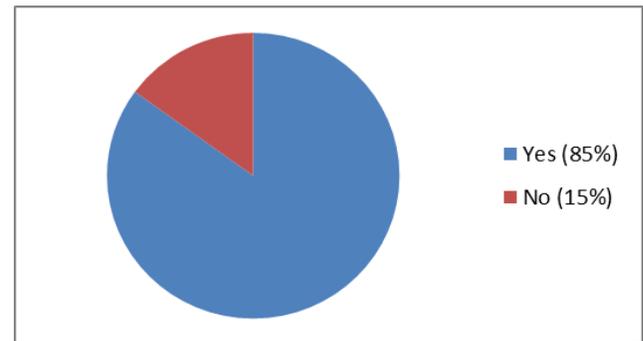
A working mother who spends her time and energy for the reputation of her concerned organization needs to be provided with at least basic facilities. An organization is defined as place where workers bring their energy into use and try their best to add to the fame of concerned authorities and in turn get benefits in the shape of incentives and rewards. If a female is performing her best for adding into the progress of her organization, then that hardworking mother deserves to be paid back by relieving her pains about her kids. As stated by Gunna and Joanna (2006), “The increase of women participation in the labor market, which is now the highest in the world, has led to the problem of women's conflicting roles as mother and family provider. The responsibility of child care was transferred to the state and the reproduction of the family is today depending on state support”. This indicates that when an individual becomes active member of that state and wins her prosperity that person does become the responsibility of that state. Similarly, when a mother puts her potential at work for the betterment of her land then she also needs to be rewarded with incentives and relief on behalf of her organization. What working mother needs the most in her life especially having very young kids who can't be left at the guarantee of any person or an institution? A devoted female worker who is also a dedicated mother as well is rewarded by her organization when she is capable enough to look after her kids in free hours.

Organizations need to reward their female workers especially those who are mothers with properly maintained daycare centers within the domain of their work place. Siegel (2001) points out that “As women entered the work force enmasse during the 1960s and

1970s, though, our society devalued the work of caring for children at home” (Siegel, 2001). With the disappearance of domestic boundaries women got overburdened with dual responsibilities. This reflects that denial of domestic labor got heightened with the rebellion of women from socially constructed ideals. On one hand they have to run domestic chores and on the other they are bound to utilize maximum potential in their area of expertise. A mother earning a lot can’t ignore her kids and if she is provided with an opportunity to take care of her kids during her job hours she can give maximum output expected from her. Luckily if a woman is allowed to earn at her own, selection of profession is then done by the patriarchal society. She is not given free hand in choosing career instead left with two choices as mentioned earlier in a national survey report that female is allowed to either join medicine or education. Thus an educated female can either become a teacher or a doctor, which means she chooses her career not according to her desire but under social pressures. Providing daycare in the workplace can have many benefits including improving employee morale, lowering turnover. Although providing workplace daycare can be expensive. Workplace daycare is an important benefit for many employees, allowing them to spend more time with their children during the workday. Parents can travel to and from work with their children, increasing the amount of time they spend together. Workplace daycare also decreases anxiety for some parents, improving their ability to concentrate on their jobs. Workplace daycare can improve employee morale and lower absenteeism and turnover because fewer employees need to take time off to look after their children. Pakistani women are the ones who bear children breastfeed them, and wean them off to solid food. The initial years in particular are the years in which children need constant monitoring and vigilant care. This is where the need for daycare centres comes in. By law, all organisations across the board in Pakistan are supposed to have daycare arrangements to enable working mothers, and even fathers, to join work after maternity and paternity leave, but very few abide by the laws. Farhat Parveen, Executive Director at National Organization for Working Communities (NOW Communities), explains how the provision for a nursery or daycare for children in law has been there since long in the Factories Act 1934 (now the Act of 2018). This provision should be there for children as young as infants to the age of six years. "While things are getting better and some public educational institutes like Karachi University and some private organizations like Aga Khan University (AKU), PILER, HANDS, and many corporate organizations have some facilities in this regard, it is not enough," says Praveen.

**Result and Discussions**

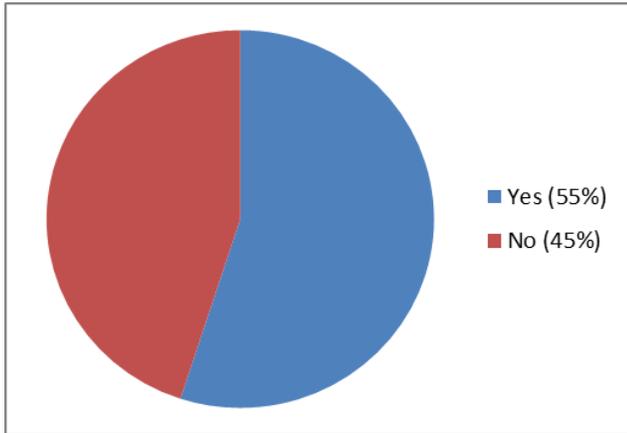
85% of the respondent teachers said yes daycare center has been provided to them and only 15% said no with a demand of daycare center (Figure 1). This shows that majority of schools and colleges in Federal Government set up in the capital city of Islamabad are providing their female teachers with this basic facility of daycare center. Although majority of the schools are providing this relief of daycare center for working mothers yet there are some working mothers who also need to be provided with daycare centers.



**Figure 1.** Availability of daycare centers in respondents’ schools

Despite having daycare centers in majority of female schools only 55% of the mother teachers are availing this facility (Figure 2). This shows that mother teachers in female schools reduced in percentage of utilizers of daycare centers. This decline in percentage indicates dissatisfaction of mothers regarding certain aspects of daycare centers. Most of the teachers said that they feel comfortable in leaving their kids at home in the hands of their grandparents. This indicated that provided daycare centers need to be improved with the provision of health and sports facilities along with a trained ‘attendant’ for the better development of teachers’ kids. Daycare centers, provided at the office premises, is a great initiative which allows working mothers to be more productive. This allows them to be more focused on their work and not feel the stress or the guilt of leaving their children at home alone or to be looked after by others. A place where mother has to leave her kids for about half a day needs to satisfy her mentally. If a daycare center is not in satisfactory condition a mother wouldn’t leave her kid, there or if she leaves them there she will not be able to perform well in the class. Half of respondents appeared satisfied with the condition of daycare center which reflects that Federal Government schools set up has kept its teachers satisfied by providing satisfactory environment for their kids in the form of daycare center.

Data collected in response to above question showed that about half of the sample population felt motivated due to availability of daycare center. Because if a teacher is mentally not relaxed she wouldn't be able to deliver and this might result in poor performance of students. Thus most of educational institutions in capital city of Islamabad add to the motivation of their female teachers and in turn receive their productive performance.



**Figure 2.** Percentage of respondents availing daycare facility

Daycare centers are actually a source of earning money for the uneducated or less educated but motivated women. If daycare center doesn't charge high rates, then costumers are attracted towards availing its services. In response to the above statement majority of mother teachers wanted to be placed in the column of agreement and said that charges of the daycare center are not high enough to be paid. About 78% of daycare utilizers pay reasonable charges which don't over burden their pocket. Only 10% disagreed and mentioned they have to pay huge amount of money for the daycare facilities they avail for their kids. This indicates that majority of daycare centers are adding to mental relaxation of working parents and help them in smooth consumption of their budget.

Analysis of the questions regarding 'attendant' of the daycare also bring into light the fact that mother teachers do observe her role and attitude towards their kids. Collected data showed (Table 1) mother teachers opinion about 'Attendant's role in the daycare center. 40% respondents said that the 'Attendant' performs her role actively. Whereas 45% mother teachers agreed that behavior of "attendant" with their kids is very well. High percentage of positive responses indicates that mothers availing daycare facilities are satisfied with the performance of 'attendant' and her behavior with their young ones.

**Table 1.** Item wise response of the Respondents

Item No	Indicator	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	Frequency	66	20	36	30	8
	Percentage	36.7	11.1	20.0	16.7	4.4
2	Frequency	10	64	56	20	10
	Percentage	5.6	35.6	31.1	11.1	5.6
3	Frequency	40	64	42	12	2
	Percentage	22.2	35.6	23.3	6.7	1.1
4	Frequency	10	52	56	34	8
	Percentage	5.6	28.9	31.1	18.9	4.4
5	Frequency	10	58	62	26	4
	Percentage	5.6	32.2	34.4	14.4	2.2
6	Frequency	15	64	62	17	2
	Percentage	8.3	35.6	34.4	9.4	1.1
7	Frequency	20	40	64	34	2
	Percentage	11.1	22.2	35.6	18.9	1.1
8	Frequency	4	18	8	70	60
	Percentage	2.2	10.0	4.4	38.9	33.3
9	Frequency	8	40	38	60	14
	Percentage	4.4	22.2	21.1	33.3	7.8
10	Frequency	26	36	80	14	4
	Percentage	14.4	20.0	44.4	7.8	2.2
11	Frequency	4	20	12	84	40
	Percentage	2.2	11.1	6.7	46.7	22.2
12	Frequency	16	34	18	60	32
	Percentage	8.9	18.9	10.0	33.3	17.8
13	Frequency	6	40	54	32	28
	Percentage	3.3	22.2	30.0	17.8	15.6
14	Frequency	62	62	16	10	10
	Percentage	34.4	34.4	8.9	5.6	5.6
15	Frequency	20	52	54	20	14
	Percentage	11.1	28.9	30.0	11.1	7.8
16	Frequency	20	75	24	38	3
	Percentage	11.1	41.7	13.3	21.1	1.7
17	Frequency	15	68	58	16	3
	Percentage	8.3	37.8	32.2	8.9	1.7
18	Frequency	31	70	24	30	5
	Percentage	17.2	38.9	13.3	16.7	2.8
19	Frequency	45	48	4	30	33
	Percentage	25.0	26.7	2.2	16.7	18.3
20	Frequency	7	75	50	15	13
	Percentage	3.9	41.7	27.8	8.3	7.2
21	Frequency	6	40	54	32	28
	Percentage	3.3	22.2	30.0	17.8	15.6

SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, UD: Undecided, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree

'Attendant' who is supposed to be the substitute of mother for a child for a short period of time appear to failing in the eyes of mother teachers as her misbehavior might affect kids adversely and damage their personality which is being groomed in her hands. This showed that "attendant" needs to be trained in the hands of a child

expert in order to improve her dealing with kids under her supervision.

Sincerity of 'attendant' towards her profession is reflected in the answers of respondents where 14% disagreed and 43% remained neutral. Remaining neutral to a statement by mother teachers indicates their dissatisfaction with the performance of 'attendant'. Lack of sincerity will adversely affect kids growing in the hands of an insincere human being. This shows that 'attendant' might be dissatisfied with what she is paid or she might not be doing this job by her choice but on someone else's demand.

50% of the respondents feel motivated and loyal to the institution due to daycare center. For better learning of students, a teacher needs to be a motivated enough as without motivation teaching – learning process is not effective. Analysis of filled questionnaires also showed that if a mother teacher is provided daycare facilities she feels motivated and delivers her plan effectively in accordance with the needs of learners.

Loyalty of staff is guaranteed if their basic needs are being fulfilled by the organization they are working for. Provision of daycare center for mothers also acts as a catalyst which boosts their energy and encourages them to give their maximum output demanded by their organization.

A child is vulnerable to the changes happening around him/her. If surrounding environment of the daycare doesn't satisfy a mother than she will always be thinking about her kids even during her work hours. Mother teachers who agreed that environment in which they have to leave their kids is comfortable enough for their kids reached a percentage of 41%. Decline in percentage of agreement indicates that surrounding and environment of daycare is not up to expectations of mother teachers. This shows that schools need to focus on the learning of kids of mother teachers who are working for better learning of kids of society.

A huge percentage of respondents said no to availability of sports facility for their kids in daycare center. About 74% of respondents disagreed and said that their kids are not availing this fantasy of childhood. Absence of sports facility in daycare center is quite alarming because kids enjoy this time period by physically participating in games. If kids are not taking part in physical activities, it lags them behind in attaining physical strength. This indicates that the concerned schools also need to focus on provision of health and sports facilities for improved growth their female teachers' kids.

65% respondents disagreed with the presence of toys in the daycare center of their schools. Absence of toys and lack of sports facilities will not let the kids develop physically and mentally which will influence their performance in future.

Standard of cleanliness and hygiene is maintained in provided daycare center. In response to above idea about half of respondents said no which shows that cleanliness is not taken as serious issue by the 'attendant'. In such unhygienic conditions child is at the risk of being attacked by the germs which in turn might damage his/her health. Less than half of population responded in agreement which shows that only few daycare centers maintain their level of hygiene which also adds to mothers' satisfaction. This satisfaction is reflected in the productive learning of students. It can be seen that majority of daycare centers don't meet standard of hygiene which is that basic condition of our religion in order to be a Muslim. Thus daycare centers need to groom those kids' personalities in hygienic environment. Daycare is properly maintained and kept according to 32% of participants. Those in disagreement exceed this proportion as such that 36% denied head teacher's role whereas 32% remained neutral. Performance of head teacher is brought into light with this high percentage of disagreement. Lack of devotion and dedication on head teacher's part will result in loss of significance of daycare center for working mothers. Thus head needs to be inquired in order make her realize her duty assigned by the institution.

A huge percentage of about 69% respondents demanded more space in daycare for their kids whereas 37% population complained about daycare being overcrowded. A place which is meant for kids and created for kids it needs to fulfill their demands. Child feels free to move his body and play whatever game he wants to play. For physical and mental health of kids' daycare needs to provide enough space with small no. of kids to play with. This brings forward the demand of female teachers about widening of daycare centers for free mobility of their kids. This also shows that either no. of mother teachers has improved or of their kids which forced them make such demand.

Daycare where a number of kids spend half of a day has to have medical facilities in order to meet emergency situation if it happens. But 69% disagreement reflects that the schools providing daycare facilities have not managed to deal with emergency situation which might occur at any time. Availability of first aid not only adds to mother's satisfaction but also relaxes 'attendant' who in any of such situation will not have to run in haste for rescuing the kids.

Keeping children of different age groups together does add to their social skills but it also influences their personality as well. 59% of respondents disagreed and said their kids don't complaint about any kind of misbehavior by upper age fellows. High percentage of disagreement indicates positive attitude of elder children and developed cooperation among kids in daycare center.

## Conclusion

Huge percentage of positive responses about availability of daycare centers in female schools shows that almost Federal Government schools and colleges are providing basic need of their female workers. Female schools which are providing daycare facilities to its female workers are in huge percentage but those availing these facilities are in less number because of their low level of satisfaction. A daycare is a place dominated by small kids which needs to be vast, well maintained, hygienic and comfortable. Percentage of responses in disagreement to the condition and management of daycare center shows that mother teachers demand improvement in management and appearance of daycare center. This in turn reflects two possibilities that either no. of teachers is having increased or no. of their kids has exceeded the available area of daycare center. Every unit run by an organization needs to be properly checked and maintained by its head, similarly daycare center has to have well trained and well groomed ‘attendant’ who actually has to replace a child’s mother in her absence. Well educated and well behaving ‘attendant’ will definitely train the kids properly and will engage them in productive activities. Negative responses in high percentage about performance and behavior of ‘attendant’ show that the ‘attendant’ either needs to be trained by a child expert or she needs to be replaced with an educated, well trained and well groomed ‘attendant’. Every daycare provided for mother teachers needs to be fully equipped with medical facility, sports facilities and toys for mother teachers’ kids as most of them disagreed about availability of medical and sports facilities.

Females need to understand the connection between identity construction and identity representation so as to choose more wisely how to represent themselves. Society needs to understand importance of female participation in the betterment of state and society itself. Educated mothers need to be accepted by the society for the wellbeing of future generations. Organizations where mothers are employed need to provide them with daycare facilities so as to motivate them in utilizing their potential in improving their students’ performance. Organizations providing daycare centers for its female workers need to pay attention on availability of sports facilities and hygienic environment suitable for the young ones of their workers. Vast area should be allocated for daycare centers in order to accommodate increasing number of kids of female teachers. ‘Attendant’ of daycare needs to be given proper training and education regarding look after of teachers’ kids.

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