

DOES LOCATION MATTER IN GENDER EQUALITY? THE IMPACT OF LOCATION ON RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL IDEOLOGIES, SEX ROLE PREFERENCES AND DIVISION OF LABOUR AMONG SIKH COUPLES IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT: *This study looks at the role of location in influencing the religious and cultural ideologies and sex-role preferences, and the pattern of division of labour of the Sikh community in Malaysia. The respondents were selected from metropolitan, urban and rural areas in Perak, Malaysia. The diverse locations are vital in understanding the possible effects of these different environments on the religious and cultural ideologies, sex-role preferences and division of labour of the communities. The different locations were used to measure the effect of different levels of development on gender ideology, sex-role perceptions and practices in their household division of labour. Thus this study takes into account development through its proxy location, in its examination of the above aspects of the Sikh community.*

Keywords: Gender Equality, Sex Role Preferences, Gender Ideology, Division of Labour, Sikh, Marriage

INTRODUCTION

This study utilized a primary data set gathered through a survey questionnaire administered to 197 Sikh households from the metropolitan, urban and rural areas of Perak. Perak is also a state in Malaysia rapidly undergoing development. Thus, this permits the identification of metropolitan, urban and rural areas. It was important to obtain a diversity of areas to see the relationship between resources, ideology, and marital power. The above areas were identified in Perak based on the definition set by the Statistical Department of Malaysia (as of 1999) as below;

Metropolitan areas consist of a population with more than 100,000 persons, Urban areas consist of a population of 1,000 - 99,999 persons and Rural areas consist of a population of fewer than 1,000 persons.

Conceptualization

Religious and Cultural Ideologies

Religion and culture are closely interlinked with each other. This can be seen in the definition of religion given by researchers [1], which states that there are some important concepts in understanding the basic elements of religion. Power and conflict can reflect the nature and significance of each of these basic elements of religion. It is stated that "Beliefs and symbols are crucial elements of culture" [1]. They further state that at the heart of religion lays a system of sacred beliefs and symbols. "Beliefs are cultural certainties that do not require empirical proof to be accepted as true or real. The beliefs enforced in religion about what is right and wrong are prescriptions for behavior and principles as guides in the daily lives of a community" [1].

In its traditionally accepted meaning, culture denotes all historically created designs for living and is transmitted from generation to generation. But it is constantly being modified by activities from within the culture and from outside. Culture in its more dynamic aspect provides for adaptation and adjustment to change. In other words, culture refers to a shared way of life among the members of society. Culture is an agreement of members in society about appropriate behaviour, values, history and heritage or rituals that should be respected and observed [2]. Culture is the language, norms, values, beliefs, knowledge, and symbols that make up a way of life. It is the understanding of how to act that people share with one another in any stable, self-reproducing group [1].

In this study, the religious and cultural ideologies on gender in various aspects of everyday life were measured using 14 identical questions asked to both the husband and wife according to researcher [3] benchmarking model. These questions were derived from the aspects of gender equality in Sikh religious and cultural ideologies. The issues cover equality of men and women in education, funerary rites, widows, equal participation in Sikh ceremonies, dowry, veil, purity and pollution, wedding ceremonies, equality in congregations and the community kitchen. These questions were formulated to establish the religious and cultural ideologies pertaining to egalitarian gender values.

Sex-Role Preferences (SRP)

Sex-role preferences are defined by researchers [4] as "preferences for desired goals and interests". Thus, a person can be referred to as "traditional" or "egalitarian" in terms of their sex-role preferences. That is, they want the rewards (and are willing to accept the costs) associated with the division of labour at home and in the society that is regulated by gender. In the traditional sex-role preferences, the woman is expected to be the primary caretaker of their children. The husband will share in their rearing in certain clearly defined but limited ways. The wife will also allow her husband to pursue his occupation without any serious intrusion on her part, as long as he is a "good provider" [4]. The application begins by conceptualizing subjective orientations as preferences for desired goals or interests. Women and men vary on the degree to which they do or do not prefer the kinds of tastes, utilities, goals, interests, rewards, costs and so forth as indicated by the sex-role preferences. The variation is generally measured by Likert-type responses (strongly agree, agree, mixed feelings, disagree, strongly disagree) to the items. This measures the index of preferences regarding a role either of a wife, husband, mother, and father [5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12]. To measure sex-role preferences in this study, respondents were asked 13 questions. These questions were asked to see the influence of gender ideology in the sex-role preferences held by the husband and wife. Both sets of questions were identical.

Division of Labour

The division of labour refers to work that is broken down into specialized tasks, with each task performed by a different set of persons [13]. The division of labour refers to the differentiation and distribution of the tasks involved in the production of goods and services. The division of

labour can be a source of interdependence and social solidarity as well as inequality and conflict. The division of labour concept can further be defined as sexual division of labour and gender division of labour. Division of labour, although socially constructed, is frequently believed to be the outcome of the 'natural' attributes and aptitudes of the sexes [14]. Division of labour refers to the idea that gender roles are culturally rather than biologically defined or it is the behavior that is expected of males and females within their society. It is the culture of a society, which exerts influence in the creation of masculine and feminine behavior where socialization shapes a person's behaviour and roles in society [15]. The division of labour is also defined as how society divides labour along the lines of gender. Different tasks, jobs and careers are considered appropriate for women and men both at the individual and institutional levels [16].

As this study focused on marital power, therefore the domestic division of labour was examined to reflect the distribution of tasks between husband and wife in their household activities and chores. In this study, questions on division of labour practiced in the household were asked to the wives. Three main spheres or domains on division of labour in the household were covered. The spheres are Activities Within the Home, Activities Outside the Home and Childcare Activities. Each of these spheres consists of various tasks or activities performed by the husband and wife in a household. Activities Within the Home consists of tasks such as the preparation for cooking, cleaning house, washing clothes, ironing and washing dishes. While the sphere on Activities Outside the Home consists of tasks such as buying groceries, paying bills and marketing. Finally, the sphere on Childcare Activities consists of feeding and bathing the children, supervision of schoolwork, sending the children to school, picking the children from school and taking them for medical treatment. The respondents were asked who did the specified tasks most often, husband, wife or others. If others, they had to specify who. As this study examines marital power between spouses, only the responses relating to husband and wife were included in the analysis.

The effect of location on religious and cultural ideologies

Tables 1 and 2, show the percentages of egalitarian and non-egalitarian religious and cultural ideological perceptions among husbands and wives respectively, by location.

The findings show that in the category of religion and religious practices, there is not much difference in the perceptions of husbands and wives in all the three areas, but in the other categories, the husbands and wives from the rural areas are more non-egalitarian than those from the metropolitan and urban areas [17; 18].

Table 3 above shows the average percentages of egalitarian and non-egalitarian religious and cultural responses of husbands and wives in metropolitan, urban and rural areas. These averages were obtained by adding the total egalitarian and non-egalitarian percentages of responses of husbands and wives on all the questions on the religious and cultural ideology and divided by the total number of questions (14) to obtain the average perception on each question asked. Table 3 shows that husbands and wives have a range of strongly egalitarian-to-egalitarian ideology.

In the metropolitan areas, husbands and wives have a strongly egalitarian ideology, while for the urban areas husbands have an almost strongly egalitarian ideology and wives have a strong egalitarian ideology. The rural areas show that husbands and wives have an egalitarian ideology. This shows that both husbands and wives in all the three areas have a strong egalitarian-to-egalitarian ideology which shows their strong beliefs on gender equality. The percentage of religious and cultural ideology can be compared to the general perceptions of the Sikhs where it is found that husbands have an average of 76.9 percent egalitarian perception, while the wives have an average of 78.4 percent egalitarian perception [17; 18].

The findings of the influence of location on the perceptions of religious and cultural ideology of the Sikh couples show that there are slightly higher egalitarian perceptions among husbands and wives in the metropolitan and urban areas compared to the rural areas. Comparing the perceptions of these three areas to the overall general perception of the community, it can be seen that metropolitan and urban areas have slightly higher egalitarian perceptions than the overall general egalitarian perceptions of this community. Rural areas have slightly lower egalitarian perception compared to the overall general egalitarian perceptions of this community. Thus, location does show a variation in the religious and cultural ideological perceptions of husbands and wives [17; 18].

The Effect of Location on Sex-Role Preferences

Tables 4 and 5 indicate the percentages on sex-role preferences of husbands and wives by location. These tables show the variations of sex-role preferences among husbands and wives from the metropolitan, urban and rural areas. These sex-role preferences are categorized as egalitarian, unsure and non-egalitarian

Table 6 shows the average percentages of egalitarian, unsure and non-egalitarian responses of the sex-role preferences of husbands and wives in metropolitan, urban and rural areas. The average percentages of egalitarian, unsure and non-egalitarian responses of husbands and wives of these groups are obtained by adding their total percentages of egalitarian, unsure and non-egalitarian responses on all the sex-role preferences questions, and by dividing the total number of questions (13) to obtain the average perception on each question asked.

Table 6 shows that the husbands have a higher percentage of egalitarian preferences in urban areas, followed by metropolitan and lastly, rural areas. However, the percentage of egalitarian and non-egalitarian responses of the metropolitan and urban areas, are almost similar. On the other hand, wives have a higher egalitarian percentage of sex-role preferences in the metropolitan areas, followed by urban areas and lastly, rural areas. However, the percentage of egalitarian and non-egalitarian preferences of the wives, are almost sim The findings of the influence of location on the sex-role preferences of the Sikh couples show that there are higher egalitarian preferences among husbands and wives in the metropolitan and urban areas, compared to the rural areas, where husbands have the highest difference in the urban areas while wives have slight differences in all the three areas. Comparing the preferences of these three areas to the overall general preferences of the community, it can be seen that only husbands in the urban areas have higher egalitarian preferences compared to the overall

Table 1: Husbands' Perceptions on Religious and Cultural Gender Ideologies by Location

Category	Ideology					
	Metropolitan		Urban		Rural	
	Egalitarian (%)	Non-Egalitarian (%)	Egalitarian (%)	Non-Egalitarian (%)	Egalitarian (%)	Non-Egalitarian (%)
Education Daughters should be given equal opportunity for higher Education	97.1	2.9	100.0	0	91.7	8.3
Women should be given equal opportunity in conducting religious ceremonies.	98.6	1.4	98.2	1.8	91.7	8.3
Women should be restricted from going to <i>gurdwaras</i> when having menstruation	98.6	1.4	96.4	3.6	98.6	1.4
Women should lead the religious congregation	95.7	4.3	92.7	7.3	97.2	2.8
Funerary Rites Women should be present at husband's cremation ceremony	51.4	48.6	45.5	54.5	38.9	61.1
Only men should light pyre	34.3	65.7	34.5	65.5	25.0	75.0
Marriage Men should demand dowry	98.6	1.4	100.0	0	100.0	0
Brides-to-be should attend her own engagement ceremony	52.2	47.8	63.6	36.4	51.4	48.6
Mothers should attend son's wedding	65.7	34.3	61.1	38.9	52.8	47.2
Widows Widow remarriage should be allowed	94.2	5.8	87.3	12.7	74.6	25.4
Widows should be given equal opportunity in all religious and cultural ceremonies	81.4	18.6	70.9	29.1	55.6	44.4
Non-Hierarchical Religious Domains <i>Langgar</i> (food served in <i>gurdwaras</i>) is important	100.0	0	100.0	0	98.6	1.4
<i>Sangat</i> (congregation in <i>gurdwaras</i>) is important	100.0	0	100.0	0	98.6	1.4
Dress Code Women should wear headgear all the time	54.3	45.7	54.5	41.8	36.1	63.9

Table 2: Wives' Perceptions of Religious and Cultural Gender Ideology by Location

Category	Ideology					
	Metropolitan		Urban		Rural	
	Egalitarian (%)	Non-Egalitarian (%)	Egalitarian (%)	Non-Egalitarian (%)	Egalitarian (%)	Non-Egalitarian (%)
Education Daughters should be given equal opportunity for higher Education	98.6	1.4	96.4	3.6	80.6	19.4
Table 2, continued Religion And Religious Practices Women should be given equal opportunity in conducting religious ceremonies.	98.6	1.4	98.2	1.8	95.8	4.2
Women should be restricted from going to <i>gurdwaras</i> when having menstruation	98.6	1.4	98.2	1.8	94.4	5.6
Women should lead the religious congregation congregation in <i>gurdwaras</i>	90.0	10.0	92.7	7.3	94.4	5.6

Funerary Rites						
Women should be present at husband's cremation ceremony	72.9	27.1	76.4	23.6	51.4	48.6
Only men should light pyre	51.4	48.6	30.9	69.1	23.6	75.0
Marriage						
Men should demand dowry	98.6	1.4	100.0	0	95.8	4.2
Brides-to-be should attend her own engagement ceremony	38.6	61.4	36.4	63.6	19.4	79.2
Mothers should attend son's wedding	64.3	35.7	61.8	36.4	31.9	66.7
Widows						
Widow remarriage should be allowed	92.9	7.1	92.7	7.3	80.6	16.7
Widows should be given equal opportunity in all religious and cultural ceremonies	85.7	14.3	92.7	7.3	90.3	9.7
Non-Hierarchical Religious Domains						
<i>Langgar</i> is important	98.6	1.4	100.0	0	100.0	0
<i>Sanggat</i> is important	100.0	0	100.0	0	97.2	2.8
Dress Code						
Women should wear headgear all the time	75.7	24.3	70.9	29.1	40.3	59.7

Table 3: Religious and Cultural Ideology of Husbands and Wives by Location

Location	Egalitarian (%)		Non-Egalitarian (%)	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Metropolitan	80.2	83.2	19.8	16.8
Urban	78.9	82.2	20.8	17.9
Rural	72.2	71.1	27.8	28.4

Table 4 Husbands' Perceptions on Sex Preference by Location

Category	Metropolitan			Urban			Rural		
	Egalitarian (%)	Unsure (%)	Non-Egalitarian (%)	Egalitarian (%)	Unsure (%)	Non-Egalitarian (%)	Egalitarian (%)	Unsure (%)	Non-Egalitarian (%)
Household Work There is some work that only man should do, and some that only women should do and they should not be doing each others.	46.4	23.2	30.4	45.3	32.1	22.6	44.4	41.7	13.9
If the wife is working outside the home, then the husband is involved with the children and household chores.	88.6	10.0	1.4	98.1	0	1.9	76.4	8.3	15.3
A husband should spend all his free time with his wife and children.	54.3	15.7	30.0	87.0	5.6	7.4	70.4	4.2	25.4
Women and Work A mother should not work outside the home while her children are young.	32.9	12.9	54.4	57.4	5.6	37.0	41.7	5.6	52.8
There should be more daycare centers/nurseries so that more young mothers could go out to work.	49.3	20.3	30.4	66.0	22.6	11.3	40.3	19.4	40.3
If a woman is working, it shows that she's dissatisfied with being a wife and a mother.	63.3	18.6	17.1	71.2	13.5	15.4	54.2	18.1	27.8

Having a full-time job affects a woman's ability to be a good mother.	29.0	21.7	49.3	64.2	17.0	18.9	55.6	25.0	19.4
A woman should still work if her family has enough money.	35.7	15.7	48.6	20.8	3.8	75.5	23.6	8.3	68.1
Financial Matters If a woman is drawing a bigger salary, this should not bother her husband.	61.4	14.3	24.3	79.6	3.7	16.7	65.3	12.5	22.2
A husband should always be the main financial support of the family.	8.6	15.7	75.7	3.8	9.4	86.8	1.4	0	98.6
Men as heads of household and men's responsibilities A husband's chief responsibility should be his job	28.6	12.9	58.6	25.9	3.7	70.4	16.7	5.6	77.8
A man should always be the head of a household.	4.3	17.4	78.3	3.7	3.7	92.6	0	2.8	97.2
Decision-making Compared to your mother's time, wives nowadays have more authority in decision-making in the family.	67.1	20.0	12.9	79.6	9.3	11.1	61.1	23.6	15.3

Table 5 Wives' Perceptions on Sex-Role Preferences By Location

Category	Metropolitan			Urban			Rural		
	Egalitarian (%)	Unsure (%)	Non-Egalitarian (%)	Egalitarian (%)	Unsure (%)	Non-Egalitarian (%)	Egalitarian (%)	Unsure (%)	Non-Egalitarian (%)
Household Work There is some work that only men should do, and some that only women should do and they should not encroach in each other's work.	50.0	25.7	24.3	40.7	29.6	29.6	27.8	48.6	23.6
If the wife is working outside the home, then the husband should be involved with the children and household chores.	94.3	4.3	1.4	79.6	5.6	14.8	81.9	1.4	16.7
A husband should spend all his free time with his wife and children.	42.9	31.4	25.7	40.7	24.1	35.2	65.3	18.1	16.7
Women and Work A mother should not work outside the home while her children are young.	37.1	24.3	38.6	38.9	16.7	44.4	27.8	22.2	50.0
There should be more daycare centers/nurseries so that more young mothers could go out to work.	70.0	15.7	14.3	51.9	18.5	29.6	44.4	29.2	26.4
If a woman is working, it shows that she's dissatisfied with being a wife and a mother.	75.7	10.0	14.3	64.8	3.7	31.5	58.3	20.8	20.8
Having a full-time job affects a woman's ability to be a good mother.	44.3	15.7	40.0	46.3	18.5	35.2	37.5	25.0	37.5
A woman should still work if her family has enough money	31.4	15.7	52.9	40.7	20.4	38.9	20.8	11.1	68.1
Financial Matters If a woman is drawing a bigger salary, this should not bother her husband.	57.1	5.7	37.1	38.9	14.8	46.3	38.9	5.6	55.6
A husband should always be the main financial support of the family	10.0	17.1	72.9	14.8	5.6	79.6	14.1	7.0	78.9
Men as heads of household and men's responsibilities A husband's chief responsibility should be his job	20.0	12.9	67.1	24.1	9.3	66.7	22.2	6.9	70.8

A man should always be the head of a household.	10.0	8.6	81.4	11.1	9.3	79.6	15.3	9.7	75.0
Decision-making Compared to your mother's time, wives nowadays have more authority in decision- making in the famil	80.0	8.6	11.4	75.9	7.4	16.7	69.4	15.3	15.3

Table 6: Sex-Role Preferences of Husbands and Wives by Location

Location	Egalitarian (%)		Unsure (%)		Non-Egalitarian (%)	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Metropolitan	43.8	47.9	16.8	15.1	39.3	37.0
Urban	54.0	43.7	10.0	14.1	36.0	42.2
Rural	42.4	40.3	13.5	17.0	44.2	42.7

Table 7 Division of Labour of Husbands and Wives By Location

ACTIVITIES	Location											
	Metropolitan				Urban				Rural			
	Wife		Husband		Wife		Husband		Wife		Husband	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Activities Within the Home												
Preparation of cooking	60	85.7	2	2.9	46	83.6	0	0	53	74.6	0	0
Cooking	63	90	1	1.4	46	83.6	0	0	53	74.6	0	0
Cleaning house	55	78.6	1	1.4	42	76.4	0	0	51	70.8	1	1.4
Washing clothes	58	82.9	1	1.4	44	80	0	0	53	76.4	0	0
Ironing	56	80	1	1.4	46	83.6	0	0	53	74.6	0	0
Washing dishes	60	85.7	2	2.9	46	83.6	0	0	52	73.2	1	1.4
Average		83.8		1.9		81.8		0		74.0		0.5
Activities Outside the Home												
Buying groceries	30	43.5	32	46.4	23	41.8	23	41.8	31	43.7	25	35.2
Paying bills	8	11.6	54	78.3	11	20	36	65.5	12	16.7	44	61.1
Marketing	33	47.8	30	43.5	26	47.3	21	38.2	43	60.6	12	17
Average		34.3		56.1		36.4		48.7		40.3		37.7
Childcare Activities												
Feeding children	11	100	0	0	17	89.5	0	0	30	90	1	3
Bathing children	10	100	0	0	18	90	0	0	28	90	1	3.2
Supervision in school work	15	75	2	100	18	90	2	10	21	78	3	11
Table 7, continued												
Sending child to school	8	53.3	6	40	6	46.2	6	46.2	8	47	7	41
Picking child from school	9	60	5	33.3	6	46.2	6	46.2	10	50	8	40
Taking child for medical treatment	11	39.3	17	60.7	10	31.3	22	68.8	16	39	22	54
Average		71.3		24.0		65.5		28.5		65.7		25.3

Table 8: Number of Households Doing Childcare Activities by Location

Childcare Activities	Metropolitan	Urban	Rural	Total
Feeding children	11	19	33	63
Bathing children	10	20	31	61
Supervision in school work	20	20	27	67
Sending child to school	15	13	17	45
Picking child from school	15	13	20	48
Taking child for medical treatment	28	32	41	101

egalitarian preferences of this community. On the other hand, wives in the metropolitan and urban areas, have slightly higher egalitarian preferences compared to the overall general egalitarian preferences of this community. Thus, location does show a variation in the ideological preferences of husbands and wives. The findings on the sex-role preferences of the Sikh couples show that husbands and wives from the metropolitan and urban areas have higher percentage of egalitarian preferences compared to those from the rural areas.

In concluding the findings on the influence of locations on the ideologies of the Sikhs, we can see that the patterns of sex-role preferences of the husbands are not as consistent as shown by the wives and it is also not consistent with their religious and cultural ideologies, but what these patterns indicate is that the metropolitan and urban areas have higher egalitarian percentage of religious and cultural ideologies and sex-role preferences compared to the rural areas [17; 18].

ilar in all the three areas. This table shows that generally husbands and wives have a high percentage of egalitarian and non-egalitarian sex-role preferences. The percentage of sex-role preferences is almost similar to the general perceptions of the Sikhs where it is found that husbands have an average of 46.1 percent egalitarian preferences, while wives have an average of 44.0 percent egalitarian preferences

The findings show that husbands from the rural areas have slightly higher non-egalitarian responses to the questions asked, followed by those from the metropolitan and lastly, urban areas, while wives from the rural areas have slightly higher non-egalitarian responses to the questions asked, followed by urban and lastly metropolitan wives [17; 18].

The effect of location on the division of labour

The previous sections have shown us how location influences the ideologies of this community. It would be interesting to see if location has any influence on the division of labour of this community.

By looking at Table 7, some interesting findings can be derived. In the first division of labour sphere, Activities Within the Home, it can be seen that larger percentage of wives from all the three areas normally do all the six tasks in this sphere, while the percentage of husbands who normally do these tasks in this sphere is very minimal. There are more metropolitan husbands (an average of 1.9 percent (11.4/6)) who normally do these activities in this sphere compared to urban (0 percent) and rural husbands (an average of 0.5 percent (2.8/6)) [17; 18].

The second sphere, in the Activities Outside the Home, it can be seen that there exists an almost equal percentage of husbands and wives who normally do these tasks only in rural areas. The metropolitan and urban areas show more husbands normally doing these tasks in this sphere. As for the item on paying bills, there is a larger percentage of husbands normally doing this task in all the three areas compared to their wives (78.3 percent of husbands in metropolitan areas, 65.5 percent of husbands in urban areas and 61.1 percent of husbands in rural areas). The item on marketing shows an almost equal percentage of husbands and wives doing this task in the metropolitan (a difference of 4.3 percent) and urban areas (a difference of 9.1 percent), but a larger percentage of wives (60.6 percent) in the rural areas normally does marketing compared to their husbands (16.9 percent).

In comparing the average percentage of husbands normally doing these tasks in the Activities Outside the Home, it can be seen that metropolitan areas have the highest percentage (56.1percent) of husbands, followed by urban husbands (48.7 percent) and lastly, rural husbands (37.7 percent) [17; 18].Table 8 shows the total number of households in different locations with applicable childcare activities. The Childcare Activities sphere shows a larger percentage of wives who normally does the tasks such as feeding children, bathing children and supervision of schoolwork. The task, sending the children to school, shows an almost equal percentage of husbands and wives normally doing this. There is a larger percentage of metropolitan wives who normally does the task of picking the children from school compared to the metropolitan husbands, whereas there are an almost equal percentage of husbands and wives in the urban and rural areas who normally do this task. Finally, the task of taking the children for medical treatment shows a larger percentage of husbands normally do this activity. When comparing the average percentage of husbands who normally do the Childcare Activities, it can be seen that husbands in the urban areas have the highest percentage (28.5 percent), followed by rural husbands (25.3 percent), and lastly metropolitan husbands (24.0 percent). On the other hand, the average percentage of wives normally doing these tasks in this sphere is the highest in metropolitan (71.3 percent), followed by rural (65.7 percent) and lastly urban (65.5 percent) areas.

In conclusion, it can be seen that there is more involvement of husbands in the metropolitan areas in the spheres, Activities Within the Home and Activities Outside the Home compared to urban and rural husbands, but there is more involvement of husbands in the urban areas in the Childcare Activities compared to the least involvement of husbands in metropolitan areas.

The diverse locations have shown different effects of development on the religious and cultural ideologies, sex-role preferences and household division of labour. The findings of the perceptions on the religious and cultural ideologies and sex-role preferences of the Sikh couples show that husbands and wives from the more developed areas have higher egalitarian ideological perceptions and preferences compared to those from the less developed areas. In looking at the division of labour, there are different patterns of involvement of husbands at different locations and in different spheres [17; 18].

CONCLUSION

This study has presented some very interesting findings in establishing gender ideology and practice among the Sikhs. This study establishes the normative guidelines as seen in the religious and cultural ideologies and sex-role preferences of the Sikhs and the practice of these ideologies as seen in their division of labour. The link between these ideologies and practices was established by examining the perceptions related to religious and cultural ideologies and sex-role preferences and its relationship with the practice of gender roles in the household in the form of division of labour as well as by considering the social environment based on the location of the couples and its influence on these ideologies and its related practices. In relation to the egalitarian gender ideology of Sikhism, it can be said that generally there is a higher egalitarian perception on gender ideology among husbands and wives, but a closer

examination of this shows that there is actually a variation of egalitarian and non-egalitarian perceptions. On the other hand, there is a great deal of variation in the views of both husbands and wives regarding sex-role preferences where some are egalitarian and others are not. Interestingly, on some issues, husbands are more egalitarian than wives. Generally, the sex-role preferences reveal that there exist an almost equal proportion of egalitarian and non-egalitarian preferences among husbands and wives.

The pattern of household division of labour is still very much patriarchal in nature, where women are doing most of the household and childcare tasks, although almost half are also involved in household *Activities Within the Home* that involve finance, like marketing. The findings indicate that while Sikhs are relatively egalitarian in their religious and cultural ideologies, they are far less so in their practices. This shows a paradoxical situation whereby ideology does not coincide with practice or practice does not comply with ideology. This indicates that there are strong external forces from non-religious sources which have an influence on the views and practices of the community.

One aspect of understanding the variations is that arising from the environment of the respondents. This is examined by comparing the views of respondents by locations. Although the findings have not always been substantially consistent, there are differences in the gender ideology and practices of the respondents at different locations. The diverse locations have shown different effects of development on the religious and cultural ideologies, sex-role preferences and household division of labour. The findings on the perceptions on the religious and cultural ideology and sex-role preferences of the Sikh couples show a greater proportion of husbands and wives from the more developed areas have egalitarian ideological perceptions and preferences compared to less developed areas. The division of labour shows different patterns of husbands' involvement in different locations and in different spheres of activities. There is more involvement of husbands in the metropolitan areas in the spheres, *Activities within the Home* and *Activities Outside the Home* compared to urban and rural husbands, but there is more involvement of husbands in the urban areas in the *Childcare Activities* compared to the least involvement of husbands in metropolitan areas.

Thus, this study has shown that the equality in the religious and cultural ideologies of Sikhism has contributed to egalitarian religious and cultural perceptions of the Sikhs. However, it has not contributed much to the equality in gender roles as expressed in their sex-role preferences or in activities performed at home in the form of division of labour. The presence of non-egalitarian sex-role preferences of men and women and the pattern of division of labour show the existence of patriarchal values amidst an egalitarian religious and cultural ideology.

Different locations have a positive but minor impact on gender ideologies and practices suggesting that the root of the gender role practices of the community is firmly entrenched in a patriarchal ideology. The sex-role

preferences of the Sikhs are not only based on the Sikh religious and cultural ideologies but are also strongly influenced by the notion of the male as the financial provider of the household determining much of the practices. Besides that, it could also be due to the influence of different cultures in the Malaysian context which is predominantly patriarchal [19]. This can be seen in the variations observed at the level of perceptions on religious and cultural ideologies and their division of gender roles. The Sikh community can thus be said to live in a culture that combines other cultures and agents of socialization that influence their practices [17; 18].

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