

Women remain on the losing side in Professional life.

## 1. Introduction.

### a. Thesis Statement

While progress has been made, women still face significant barriers in achieving professional success, and overcoming these requires addressing institutional bias and societal expectations.

## 2. Why women still lagging behind in Professional life

## 3. Challenges faced by women in Professional life.

- a. Gender pay gap still exists
- b. Workplace harassment deters women from working
- c. rise of gender based violence in workplace
- d. Gender based Stereotypes holding women back
- e. Men are given more leadership roles.
- f. Implicit biases in hiring.

## 4. The root Causes of these challenges

- a. Under valuation of women work
- b. Power imbalance and normalized sexism
- c. Lack of effective reporting mechanism and support system.
- d. limited role models and representation
- e. Lack of mentorship and sponsorship opportunities
- f. focus on traditional masculine qualities.

## 5. Strategies to facilitate women in ~~work~~ professional life.

- a. Promoting pay transparency
- b. Implementing comprehensive anti-harassment policies
- c. Establishing Confidential reporting channels.
- d. Celebrating female role models and showcasing diverse successes.

## 6. Conclusion.

Picture two children, eager and determined to cross the monkey bar on the playground. One swift and strong, swings effortlessly across, reaching the end with a smile on his face. Whilst the other with the same determination, struggles to hold on to the bars, her smaller stature and limited reach hinders her progress and makes the monkey bars mock at her face. This is not just a picture of two children, yet the reality of the unfair world. Despite women making endless efforts they are still not allowed to reach their full potential. While progress has been made, women still face significant barriers in achieving professional success, and overcoming these requires addressing institutional biases and societal expectations. The challenges that women face in their professional life ranges from ~~gen~~ gender pay gaps to implicit biases in hiring and from gender based violence in workplace to gender based harassment also accompanied by different social and cultural stereotypes that holds women back from working to their full potential. As a matter of fact these challenges are not something new yet they have risen from centuries old problems that have just taken a new face. This can be the undervaluation of women work, the power imbalance and normalization of sexism or maybe can be due to the traditional focus on masculine features in work.

place. Nonetheless there is still hope to make the world and workplaces better and safe for women.

If we have the women in Pakistan are even lagging behind in workplace and realities are not something that we need to be proud of. According to the world bank report of 2022 Pakistan has one of the lowest female labor force participation in the world, at around 22%. Compared to the global average of 47%. This does not stop here, the picture gets even uglier if looked at the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2020's report according to which the participation gap even wider in rural areas where only 8% of women are employed compared to 31% in urban areas. This clearly shows that we as a nation ~~are~~ are failing to empower women in the work place by causing them all of hurdles.

The Gender pay gap still exists in 2023. As women ~~even~~ are payed far less than men are payed for the same amount of work done. This causes disparities and doesnot allow women to have full financial stability. According to the <sup>2020</sup> report of International Labour Organization, in Pakistan, women earn 34% less than men on average for the same work. This is one of the highest pay gaps in the world.

•beside pay gaps work place harrasments also

deters women performance at work place. Workplace harassment has a detrimental impact on mental and physical health, and this results in decreased productivity that ~~is~~ hinders career advancement. According to a 2018 survey by UN Women found that 40% of Pakistani women had experienced some form of harassment or discrimination at work. This ~~reinfor~~ survey reinforces that woman remains on the losing side in professional life.

further more, The ~~a~~ increase in workplace violence against women also casts shadows over women success. Workplace violence overall reduces a women's job satisfaction, that is evident from the low participation rate, and creates barriers to career development. According to International Labour Organization's (ILO), 2019, report shows that 58% of women globally experience violence at work place. As a result many women are not willing to work or doesn't feel safe at work place.

Gender Stereotypes are also a ~~high~~ Spotlight Challenge for women career development. As in many rural areas and even some urban locations the societal expectations from women push them towards "feminine" professions like teaching or nursing, while discouraging them from pursuing STEM fields or leadership roles. According to a UNESCO

report only 24% of STEM graduates in Pakistan are women. These stereotypes hinders women progress and holds them back from career development.

Another reason for women's loss at work place is that men are usually considered for leadership roles. As women often lack access to established professional networks dominated by men, hindering their visibility and advancement opportunities. According to PWC's 2020 report, women comprise only 5% of CEOs in Pakistan. This highlights the stark underrepresentation of women in top leadership positions.

Another challenge faced by women in professional life is of implicit biases in hiring. Recruiters might unknowingly hold stereotypes about women's capabilities and suitability for certain roles, affecting their evaluation of resume and performance in interviews. As per world bank's study of 2020, Pakistani women are 28% less likely to be hired than men with the same qualification. This suggests implicit bias influencing hiring decisions.

These challenges that women face in work place are not just some highlighted challenges, yet the root cause behind challenges are something that really need attention and should be catered in order to

empower women and be back on the track of prosperity for instance;

Women's work is mostly undervalued. This undervaluation of women work causes ~~gender pay gap~~ is because skills and qualities traditionally associated with women, such as communication, empathy, and emotional intelligence, are often undervalued compared to "masculine" skills like assertiveness and decisiveness. This leads to lower pay for job dominated by women, even when they require significant skill and expertise.

Furthermore, Power imbalance in workplace and normalisation of sexism ~~causes~~ leads to harassment. As traditional workplace structures often create uneven power dynamics, with men occupying more leadership ~~roles~~ positions, and makes it harder for women to speak out against harassment. On the other hand normalisation of sexism in the form of sexist remarks that can be jokes, comments, and unwelcomed behavior that denigrate women or objectify their bodies can normalize a culture of disrespect and contribute to a climate where harassment is more likely to occur.

Things ~~do~~ get ~~even~~ worse when there is a lack of effective reporting and support system. This causes fear in women as they fear retaliation.

stigma, or disbelief if they report incidents, leading to widespread underreporting and perpetuation of gender based violence. As a result out of all the women aged 15-49 facing violence only 39% gets reported (UN Women Survey). As a consequence gender based violence keeps on rising.

Adding to the Causes, we see that there are a limited role model and representation for women. When young girls and women see few or no females leaders, scientists, engineers, or CEOs in their field, it subconsciously reinforces the misconception that these roles are not meant for them. This is reinforced by American Psychological Association's research, according to which lack of female role models can lead to lower career aspirations and self confidence among young women. Thus the stereotypes that were common decades ago are still hurting women career prospects.

~~From~~ Beside these there also is lack of mentorship and sponsorship opportunities for women. ~~mentorship~~ ~~allows~~ it is through mentorship that experienced individuals provide career development advice, connections, and confidences but as women lack mentorship as due to limited network their career development hurls. This is evident from the fact that in Pakistan only 5% of the CEOs are women thus ~~not~~ including women network. hence men are given more leadership roles.

Furthermore, the world still focuses on traditional masculine qualities. It is often thought that leaders shall have qualities like bravery, courage, management etc qualities and these qualities are associated with the Men gender. This leads to the creation of implicit biases in hiring and limiting career growth opportunities for women.

These issues that have lasted for centuries, ~~has~~ are somehow thought ~~not~~ to be unresolvable but however women struggles through the history have solved many of them from gaining right to vote, to property rights. Steps are also taken today to solve them and possible solutions are also presented for instance;

Pay Promotion transparency would reduce gender pay gaps. For the promotion of pay transparency robust policy measures would be required. As in Pakistan the Constitution in article 25 and 38 guarantees equality before law and non-discrimination based on sex, provides a legal basis for equal pay initiatives. This is further enforced by The Employment (Discrimination) Act, 2013 that prohibits discrimination to pay on the basis of sex, gender or cast. Such laws should be enforced with a robust complaint procedure, investigation, and penalties would ensure equal to pay for all genders.



Secondly, by implementation of comprehensive anti-harassment policies we can have a significant reduction in gender based violence in workplace. Implementing anti-harassment policies would deal with any type of harassment or bullying women face in the workplace. For instance Section 509 and 510 of Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) defines and penalize various forms of harassment, including sexual harassment. This would ~~not~~ save women from workplace harassment and strengthening the work capabilities.

Thirdly, Confidential reporting channels should be established for women. This would enable women to report any kind of harassment, violence or any sort of discrimination without the fear of being held again for torture. This can be done through establishing dedicated enforcement unit that would work as a specialised unit within the labor department focused on investigating and resolving equal rights, and other cases. This would help eliminate violence, harassment and biases against women, further giving them chance to strengthen their place and development in workplace.

Finally, female role models shall be celebrated and showcased. Celebrating and showcasing female role models would ~~enable~~ motivate and encourage other women to also

take steps and work for their betterment  
for instance Malala Yousofzai got highlighted  
and enabled the girls and women  
to ~~use~~ fight and raise voice for their  
education right. As a result today  
we see that ~~swat~~ board being  
topped by a female student, we see  
girls from swat working in film industry  
and many more. Thus enabling and  
bringing women on the winning side  
of the equation.

To sum up the above discussion, we  
can say that ~~despite~~ many hurdles  
and challenges from a wide range  
of institutions sabotage women success  
in the professional life, these  
hurdles include grave examples such  
as gender pay gap, harassment, stereotypes  
holding women on the losing side of the  
equation. Yet, by addressing the  
root causes of these challenges such  
as lack of effective reporting system, undervaluation  
of women work or be it a societal  
bias towards favouring masculine  
qualities would not only help women  
in the workplace but can become a  
light of hope for millions of women  
trapped at home who ~~are~~ just because  
of fear of being harassed at work  
place. The source of this light can  
easily be made by ~~and~~ adding

and embedding our policy framework along  
spreading education and promoting  
gender equality. This ray of hope is  
not that far or not that difficult to achieve  
as with the struggles in right direction  
women were able to achieve voting rights  
in the American society and soon one day  
they will be on the winning side of  
professional life equation.