

Women Empowerment & Social Constraints

Gender inequality in society impedes the growth and advancement of women in society in the contemporary era. Through women empowerment, women can achieve their desired goals. Women empowerment is a myth because many social, political, cultural, and religious constraints restrict women to play their role in the development of society proving the notion that women's empowerment is a myth. Women's empowerment has remained compromised in Pakistan. Many factors prove that women's empowerment is a myth. First, economic deprivation causes disempowerment of women, and gender huge gap in Pakistan shows that it is a myth. Second, the role of women in decision making process of politics proves the fact that women empowerment is a myth. Thirdly, barbaric customs and rituals in Pakistan and other third world countries play an active

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role in shaping attitudes and behaviours towards women that regarded women empowerment is a myth.

— Fourthly, domestic violence

cause physical harm and psychological injury to women in our society.

Violence hampers the concept of women empowerment. Fifthly, forced marriages violate the important principle of women empowerment that is freedom and autonomy. Early marriages in

Pakistan proves the fact that it is a myth. Lastly, education empowers the women; however, million of girls

are out of school that proves the notion that women empowerment is a myth. No country in the world

can move ahead without empowering women. Women empowerment is a

myth in Pakistan and Pakistan

needs to safeguard women to empower them in all segments of society.

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Women Empowerment is the process of increasing women's access to control over the strategic life choices that affect them and access to the opportunities that allow them fully to realize their capabilities.

Women's empowerment as an economic, political or socio-cultural process challenges the system of sexual stratification that has resulted in women's subordination and marginalization in order to improve women's quality of life. Social empowerment refers to the ability of women and girls to act individually or collectively to change social relationships and the institutions and discourse that exclude them and keep them in poverty. Women are economically empowered when they have both the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make and act on economic decisions. Political empowerment involves having the power, ability, critical awareness and sense of group

identity to take action in order to create change in a political system.

These types of women empowerment are essential to empower women in our society. Hence, no society can progress in all spheres of life without ~~#~~ women empowerment.

The history of women's empowerment testifies to the sad reality that it is a myth in the contemporary era. Women have faced discrimination, marginalization and oppression throughout history, and the struggle for women empowerment is ongoing. In Medieval Europe, women were often viewed as inferior and subject to strict gender roles. During the Enlightenment and the rise of modern democracy, there were some attempts to improve women's status, but the progress was slow and uneven. The 19th century saw the rise of ^{the} women's suffrage movement, which fought for women's right to vote and participate

in political life. ~~With~~ In the wake of the emergence of 21st Century, women empowerment is still a myth in the developing countries such as Pakistan.

The ~~significance~~ of Women empowerment is a crucial driver of social, economic and political development. It creates opportunities for women to participate fully in all aspects of life including education, employment, and decision making. It promotes gender equality and helps to challenge patriarchal norms and stereotypes that limit women's potential. Women empowerment is also essential for promoting inclusive and sustainable development goals that benefits all members of society. According to the newspaper China daily, the government of the Saudi Kingdom has launched "Saudi ^{on 22 March, 2015} Women's Empowerment Initiative," which aims to increase qualitative participation of women in the public and private

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sectors at all career levels. Therefore, by empowering women, we can build a more equitable, just and prosperous world for everyone.

Across the globe, many women and girls face discrimination on the basis of sex and gender in the contemporary era. Gender equality is a fundamental right and that right is violated by our society. Gender parity is not recovering, according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2022. The gap has been closed by 68.1%. It will take another 132 years to close the global gender gap. However, the concept of women's empowerment is taken as an offensive idea in developing countries including Pakistan. Therefore, this proves the fact that women empowerment is still a myth in the modern age.

There are many factors which have made women empowerment

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a myth. Economic deprivation is the first and foremost cause of women empowerment in society that hampers the progress of women.

It is defined as a condition in which women are denied access to economic resources, opportunities, and benefits, leading to their economic disempowerment and exclusion.

One of the primary reasons for economic deprivation is the gender wage gap. Women are often paid less than men for doing the same job, which leads to economic disparities between the genders. According to the Global Wage Report 2018/2019 (ILO), women in Pakistan earn 34% less than men on average.

In another review of Harvard Business 2022, women still earned 17% less than men on average. Without equal access to fair wages, women still will continue to face economic barriers that prevent them from achieving

their full potential and contributing to their communities and societies. Hence, economic deprivation of women leads to the fact that women empowerment is a myth.

Moreover, Women in Politics played a vital role in strengthening decision making process of the country. In a patriarchal society, women have historically been underrepresented that shows women empowerment is a myth. This is partly due to cultural norms and biases that prevent women from participating in public life. The National Assembly of Pakistan has a total of 342 members, including 60 seats reserved for women, as per Article # 51. This low representation has been cited as a major reason for women's subjugation in the country's political decision making process. In Pakistan, the role of women in politics is decreasing, not only in the national and

Provincial assemblies but also in local government institutions. In 2020, the representation of women in assemblies were only 19%. On the contrary, in South Asia, Nepal is on top with 32.7% women representation in Parliament. (Dawn, 2020). In the nutshell, women empowerment in the developing countries is a myth due to low representation of women in decision making.

Furthermore, Cultural customs and traditions hinders the empowerment of women in our society. These traditions can play a significant role in shaping attitudes and behaviours towards women. In past ignorant people treated women as slave. They regarded her as a tool to quench their sensual desires. They declared that women had no right to stand before men whatever the circumstances were. Before the advent of Islam, Arabs used to

bury their daughters. In addition to that, people in modern era still buried their daughters. According to Daum 2019, the Edhi Foundation found 375 newborn babies buried in various parts of Karachi, most of them girls. This is mainly due to pregnancies out of wedlock, and the fact that many people do not want girl children. Therefore, the practice of cruel customs and traditions shows that women empowerment is a myth.

In addition to it, domestic violence against women is one of the social constraints in our society. It is defined as any act committed within the family, by a family member, or behaviour that resulted in physical harm or psychological injury to an intimate partner or another member of the family. The violence can be fueled by a range of factors, including economic

insecurity, social norms, and a lack of legal and institutional support for victims. According to Dawn, 14, 189 cases of gender based violence were registered in Pakistan in 2021. Another studies showed that 40% of women experienced physical or emotional violence in their lifetime. The famous quotation of Ben Ki Moon suggests that "violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable." To conclude, domestic violence is a heinous act that shatters women's personality and proves that women empowerment is a myth.

Besides it, forced marriages are the norm in developing countries, and they have created a notion of the emotionally unfulfilled. The forced marriages is considered a form of human rights abuse. It violates the principles of the freedom and autonomy

of women. Young girls who have not yet reached puberty, are forced to marry older men. In extreme cases, the use of young girls offered up as brides to settle disputes or pay debts. The practice largely stems from the prevalence of gender inequality in society, ~~and~~ patriarchal cultural norms, and weak legislation. 21% of Pakistani girls are married by the age of 18, and 3% before 15 years of age. (UNICEF Report, 22). Another report by the international agency claims that Pakistan has the sixth-highest number of child brides in the world. To conclude, forced marriage is a form of sexual abuse in which women is subject to assault that lead to the fact; women empowerment is a still a myth.

Apart from it, the role of education in women empowerment is as essential as the foundation stone.

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However, inadequate educational facilities restrict women to household chores, taking away their right to empowerment.

Some of the main challenges that impede girls' access to education are lack of hygiene facilities at schools, lack of educational infrastructure, and absence of safe environment. According to Dawn,

Female literacy rate in 2023 in several areas stands at 38pc. More

than 12 million girls are deprived of education in Pakistan. Article

25(A) of the constitution makes it obligatory to educate children age 5-16 regardless of gender. Another

research suggest that approximately 150,000 girls are out of school in Lahore alone. Consequently,

Women cannot pursue education owing to inadequate facilities in schools that lead to women's empowerment a myth.