

Pakistani women have same chances as men have

The Holy Quran says that women have the right to work and they cannot be denied this right: "For men there is a reward for what they have earned (and) for women there is a reward for what they have earned."

The verse clearly indicate equality of opportunities for both male and female but unfortunately, Muslim world has failed to do so. However, Pakistani women are facing inequality in different spheres of life while equality of chances is also seen in some spheres. But, inequality of opportunities is more dominant in Pakistan's case. It is the result of ^{prevailing} patriarchal system, orthodox mindsets, cultural barriers and conventional values and customs prevailing in Pakistani society. Inequality and discrimination on the basis of sex portrays bleak and gloomy picture of Pakistan before the world. Unevenness in the availability of chances is manifested in the form of male's preference over female for job appointment. Similarly, women are deprived of right of family planning, access to education especially higher education, right of marriage with her own choice as well as political rights which are ^{available to} men in Pakistan. Although, opponents of ^{the prevalence of} equality of chances gives stance that women have equal opportunities in employment sector, education, family planning and political spheres

Pakistani women have both equal as well as unequal ~~as~~ as men. In Pakistan, women are enjoying equal chances in some spheres of life while at the same time they are facing unequal opportunities in other spheres of life. The women in Pakistan are striving for equal opportunities since ~~Pakis~~^{Pak^{tan}}'s independence in 1947 but still they have not achieved equal rights for themselves. It is evident through Gender gap report 2023, in which Pakistan is ranked 142 out of 146 countries. This report has unveiled that gender equality is nothing more than a myth in case of Pakistan. On the other hand, women also have equal chances as men in some fields. For instance, Pakistan Medical and Dental Council's admission policy is based on gender parity quota, in which 50% seats are allocated for male and 50% for female. This depicts equality of opportunities.

Pakistani women faces difficulty in getting jobs as compared to men. It is due to the preference of men over women in the fields of job. Employer wants employee who is rational, intellectual, energetic, decisive and emotionally strong and men are considered to possess all these qualities then ^{women} men. While women are considered as last option as if no one is found for job then women is hired. According to International Labour Organization, in 2022, ratio of female to male labor force participation rate was 30.43%.

This ratio indicates that women are not considered as a priority for job employers for selecting them on a job.

Pakistani women are also deprived of the right to do family planning. They are the slaves of their husband and have to follow the instructions of them. The desire of men for big family, male child and at least 4 to 5 heirs make women powerless and she become child producing machine without any control on family size. at the cost of her physical and mental health. Pakistani culture doesnot allow women to express her wish about family size and also use of

Contraceptives is considered against the culture as well as society make the women a stigma who either intend to use contraceptives. Resultantly, it is well suited for Pakistan that women are unable to do family planning and remain child producing machine.

In Pakistan, women do not enjoy same opportunities in the field of education especially higher education. As Pakistan is a patriarchal society in which male are dominant either as father, husband and brother who put restrictions on women higher education. They consider that if their daughters, wives, and sisters get higher education, they will become powerful, dominating, rebellious and more respectful than them, so men stopped them forcefully for getting or completing higher studies within country or abroad. and society supports men. According to world Bank statistics, 44.84% percentage of women are in tertiary education in 2018 which is slow than other developing countries. So, the women in Pakistan do not have equal access to education as men have.

Pakistani women also face discrimination in terms of right to marriage. The woman, who expresses her desire to marry with person of her own choice or refuse family to get married due to some goals which she wanted to achieve in her life, is considered as violator of family and society traditions as well as become traitor in the eyes of society. On the contrary, man who shows interest in any woman and express his desire, is readily accepted by family because after all he is man who can do anything, of his society easily get married. When women demand right to marriage they are killed in name of honour killing as reported by Human Rights commission that roughly 1000 women are killed in name of honor killing in Pakistan every year. Thus, Pakistani women are deprived of their very basic right in Pakistan.

In Pakistan, women do not get equal opportunities in the field of politics. As women are considered as fragile, inefficient, financially weak and powerless, so they could not get chance to actively perform in their political parties especially at leadership front. They are given dormant positions in parties along

with it they face family pressure of equitting politics for giving proper attention to family as well as they endure various forms of harassment during their political career, which affect Her performance. In 2023, Global gender gap report, Pakistan ranks at 95 out of 145 countries which depicts miserable condition of women in politics. So, Pakistani women are not allowed to perform freely in political spheres in comparison to men.

Many people in Pakistan view that Pakistan women are enjoying equal chances as being enjoyed by men and they support their through numerous arguments.

Proponents argue that women are given equal opportunities or even more chances than men for getting a job. As whenever any job is advertised, women are not only given opportunity to try for qualifying the job in open merit but also separate quota is allocated for them, so that they could not consider themselves weak then men. Even in private sector; they are given equal chances of being selected for numerous tasks and jobs due to their hard working and responsible nature

Federal government has reserved 10% quota for employment of women to all posts in federal government along with open merit quota. Conclusively, they are enjoying dual benefits in employment front.

Females are now more involved in family planning in Pakistan. It is due to the weakening of patriarchal nature of Pakistani society which has enabled women to raise voice for their health and control fertility rate for controlling family size. Pakistani women have got awareness about the negative implications of becoming child producing machine and they are actively & courageously participating family planning decisions, even being pressurized by their husbands. Quairie and Aziz have conducted a study named as "women's decision-making and contraceptive use" and found that women today is more decisive in family size determination than in previous times. Hence, Pakistani women are even empowered in this sphere.

In Pakistan, enrollement of women in education sector is increasing with time. People have realized that education is necessary for both men and women and hindering women from getting education either

primary, secondary or tertiary education will be not bad or harmful for their families but also for whole society.

Even women are allowed to continue her higher education within or out of country for achieving their goals and securing their future. According to Dr. James: if you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family. Pakistanis have understood this concept, so^{are} allowing women to pursue her educational career.

Proponents further argue that Pakistani women are enjoying right to marriage alike men. Feminist^t movements in Pakistan have done great effort for ensuring women right to marry with her own choice without any family or societal pressures. Different marriage laws have been enacted in Pakistan for ensuring women marriage right and giving it legal cover to protect women from blacklashes of society and becoming victim of honor killing. In Pakistan, a woman can reach court if she is forced into marriage against her will and can obtain a decree of jactitation of marriage. Conclusively, women in Pakistan

have equal chances of marrying with her own desire or choice like men.

Women are considered as important pillar of Pakistani Politics. They are given various opportunities to run party affairs, contest elections and lead as assembly leaders as well as ministers because 49.6% of Pakistan's population comprises female. Political parties know that ^{they} could not grab maximum votes in elections without female contestants, supporters and voters, so these parties try to keep women indulge in political matters as like men. The best example of women empowerment in political sphere is in the form of Benazir Bhutto, who was the first lady who became prime minister of Pakistan as well as anyone muslim country. There are numerous precedents of political women in Pakistan so it can be said that Pakistan ensures political rights of women as well as men.

Men are given preference over women in employment sector because men are considered rational than women. As society is of view that men are intelligent and more capable of using their brain productively while female are emotional beings and lack rationality. So, employers prefer to select male as employees because they believe that men can take better decisions and work efficiently in their business, organization or any other institute. A study undertaken by University of Cambridge has revealed that women are more empathetic sex while men are more analytical and logical. Therefore, the validation of men rationality through various researches have developed a notion among employers to hire men than women.

Women in Pakistan are not involved to ~~do~~ family planning due to patriarchal society nature. As Pakistan is male-centric and male dominating ^{society} since its independence, so it restricts women to express her views particularly in deciding family size. It is mere a dream of Pakistani women to involve in family planning, as if she say something to her husband to either have or not have a child at any stage of life,

her husband gives her a shut up call and even her parents donot support her because they consider man a sole decision maker of family size. A woman right activist omaima Lone endorsed that patriarchy exist in Pakistan and it is a predicament for Pakistani women. So, the harsh reality of Pakistani society is patriarchy which has deprived women from their rights, particularly family planning right.

Similarly, Parents in Pakistan prefers to invest in boys education than girls. They consider that spending money on son's education may benefit them in their oldhood time as son supports them financially while girls leave them after their marriage. They consider spending on their son's education as investment and on female education a burden and wastage of money as they call girls "Praya Dan", resultantly girls remain deprived of their right to education especially higher education. As in 2023, literacy rate of men in Pakistan is 72.5% while of women is 51.8%, it shows a major/big gap between men and women education level. So, it is right to say that, parents prefer

to spend on boys education than girls.

In, Pakistan, if a female marry without her parents consent^{it} is considered against Pakistan culture. As Pakistani society is patriarchal so it does not allow women to express^{her} choice or desire of marrying with a person whom she likes and want to marry. Hundreds of woman have lost their lives in the name of honour killing in Pakistan and most of them cases are due^{to} because they wanted to marry of their own choice but their parents did not allow them because ~~so~~ **of the fear** of violation of societal and cultural norms. As Mehmil Khalid highlighted in her article, "Honour killings remain unchallenged" that in Pakistan, many women are not allowed to marry of their choice due to deeply rooted cultural norms. So, marrying with own choice is considered a crime in Pakistan.

Women are not given equal chances in politics as they are not considered to defeat rival parties. Men are given excessive importance in political parties and they are awarded with party tickets on preferential basis due to the notion that they can easily win seat and compete political

opponents while female is not capable to do so. It is contemplated that being a female, women is weak and cannot bear hardships in political affairs, so granting her valuable position and main role in party may be a deficit deal. That's why, they remain dormant in political parties.

Conclusively, it is right to say that equality to Pakistani men and women in the provision of opportunities can be merely exist in fictitious stories and dramas not in reality. Although, efforts are being made in Pakistan but due to patriarchal structure of Pakistani society, cultural barriers and ancient way of thinking have refrained Pakistan in achieving gender parity. Each year, gender gap report represents and unveils the miserable and daunting plight of gender inequality. Despite being the part of the modern world, Pakistan is still combating conventional and petty

issue of gender unevenness in different spheres of society. ^{In a nutshell,} It is undeniable fact that gender parity is important for every nation likewise for Pakistan because of its immense importance that is evident through Kofi Annan famous saying: "Gender equality is critical to

to the development and peace of
every nation.