

# Status of Women in Pakistan.

## 1) Introduction

### Thesis Statement

Women play an important role in the socioeconomic development of a country. The women in Pakistan are facing myriad of challenges; efforts are needed to empower women in Pakistan.

## 2) Overview of status of women in Pakistan. Background

## 3) Problems and Issues faced by women in Pakistan

- a) Decreased women participation in Politics.
- b) Less amount of women labour force participation with unequal job opportunities.
- c) The literacy rate of Pakistani women is very low.
- d) Women are facing various forms of Gender based violence.
- e) Major women population is facing health issues.
- f) There is lack of proper implementation of laws.

## 4) Improvements in status of women in Pakistan

- a) The representation of women in politics is gradually increasing.
- b) Steps have been taken to promote women participation in economy.
- c) Laws have been enacted to promote <sup>provision of</sup> women rights and protection.
- d) Improvement in trial and investigation system.

in gender based violence cases.

5) Measures needed to promote women empowerment in Pakistan

a) Government should take measures to enhance women labour force participation

b) Special attention should be given towards female education

c) Mass awareness is needed to reduce sociocultural barriers.

d) The laws should be implemented at its true sense.

6) Conclusion

According to Swami Vivekanand, There is no chance for welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for the bird to fly with one wing. This clearly indicates the importance of women empowerment for the welfare of society. Pakistan cannot attain its social and economic development without women participation. The status of women in Pakistan is not satisfactory. They are facing underrepresentation in various sectors including politics, labour force, education and technology. Pakistani women are also facing various forms of violence and health issues. The status of women in Pakistan is gradually improving as in the form of improved political participation, Provision of laws by the state for protection of women rights. <sup>The</sup> Government has taken steps to improve women employment by providing quota system and scholarships for women. Efforts are needed to empower the women in Pakistan via true implementation of laws, Mass awareness about women rights and Education. Media and Civil society should play their role for ~~the~~ decreasing socio cultural barriers for

women. Women play an important role in the socio economic development of a country. The status of women in Pakistan is not upto the mark. Practical steps are needed to ensure women empowerment.

Three stages. Quaide-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah said, "There are two powers in the world. One is sword and the other is pen. There is continuous rivalry and competition between the two. There is another power stronger than both, that is women." This shows the immense strength of women which can be used to change the world. The struggle for women right in Pakistan was started from 1949, when All Pakistan Women Association was founded by Rana Liaquat. After that Pakistan Action forum, inspired by Second wave of feminism was formed. Then, Aurat Foundation was created in 1986 during Zia-ul-Haq era. In 1987, Pakistan Human rights Commission was formed. In 2002, Pakistan Association of women studies was formed. It was inspired by third wave of feminism and ~~best~~ results in inclusion of Gender studies as a subject. Different associations have been working for the protection of women rights in Pakistan.

The status of women in Pakistan is not satisfactory as they are facing various

sociocultural barriers and issues. One of them is the underrepresentation of women in politics. The women are only able to come to on the reserved seats in the provincial and National Assembly. It is very difficult for them to contest and compete their male counterparts in the general seats because of dominating patriarchal structure and financial ~~barriers~~ hindrances. That is why the representation of women in Politics is very low.

There is less amount of women participation in economy with unequal job opportunities. The percentage of women labour force participation is very small i.e 24% as compared to men labour force participation i.e 82%. According to Labour force participation Gender gap Index, Pakistan lies at the 4<sup>th</sup> position among 136 countries. Moreover, there are unequal job opportunities. Women are forced to Pink Collar jobs mostly. According to Betty Freden, women are not paid properly. This depicts the economic exploitation of women.

The large ~~sur~~ population of Pakistani women are illiterate. The literacy rate of Pakistan is 62% with women <sup>nearly</sup> 51% and men 62%. The overall digital literacy rate of Pakistan is 50%. Out of this, woman's digital literacy rate is 38% and man's 57%.

There is large percentage of out of school girls in Pakistan. The <sup>range of</sup> women illiteracy is one of the greatest issue in Pakistan.

Pakistani women are facing various forms of Gender based violence. These include domestic violence, honour killings, acid throwing and Harrassments etc. Ayesha Shahid in her book "Silent voices, untold stories", have discussed the issue of domestic violence in Pakistan.

Very few cases of violence are reported due to dominating Patriarchal structure and lack of facilities and Justice. Sanam Maher Baloch in her book "~~Q~~ Sensational life and death of Dandeel Baloch", have highlighted the story of honor killing of social media artist. In this way, there are many untold <sup>stories</sup> and few ~~reported~~ cases of violence faced by Pakistani women.

Women are also facing many health issues. These include mortalities during delivery, repeated pregnancies, anemia and depression. It is estimated that 179 out of <sup>every</sup> nine lac women die during the delivery. The fertility rate of women in Pakistan is 3.5 per women. This is higher among uneducated women and in rural areas. Major population of women are anemic. Women are serving the families while ignoring their own health.

There is underrepresentation of women in technology. Due to lack of opportunities and socio-cultural barriers, women are not encouraged to work in the field of technology. It is estimated that there are 22% of <sup>women</sup> AI professionals Globally and almost absent in Pakistan. According to Shehzadi Zamurrad in her book 'women and social change in Pakistan', women are facing socio-econom barriers due to deep rooted patriarchal structures and strong opposition from orthodox and any agent of change have limited impact due to these factors. So, the participation of women in the field of technology is very low.

Although the women in Pakistan are facing many issues, the status of Pakistani women is gradually improving. The political participation of women is increasing with time. Different political parties are now enhancing their youth representation ~~strong~~ including women. These women are playing their role in highlighting women issues via social media platforms and ~~discussion~~ political platforms.

The Government has taken ~~some~~ measures to enhance women participation in economy. The special women quota is maintained for women to promote employment opportunities. Women are also engaged in online businesses and teaching. But the measures have been

taken on a very small scale. ~~There~~ There is no focus on the inclusion of rural women in labour force participation. Parliament has enacted many laws for the protection and safeguard of women rights in Pakistan. The Latest Paternity leave act 2023 is an important development in which women ~~are~~ <sup>will</sup> get 6 months leave for the delivery and her husband ~~will~~ get leave for 1 month. Furthermore, women harassment protection act, ~~the~~ the acid control and prevention act, the rape trial and interrogation act, zainab alert are the other examples. Women parliamentarians played an important role in highlighting the women issues on national level.

~~The~~ The system of ~~investigation~~ <sup>trial</sup> and investigation along with the reporting <sup>and complaint</sup> system is made easier by some provincial governments and central government as well. The complaint centers related to women violence have been launched. Mobile apps and ~~to~~ helplines have been introduced so that women can easily file a complain. The culprits of Noor-e-Mugaddam case ~~and~~ Motorway rape case and zainab murder case have been punished after speedy trial and investigation.



~~Very~~ Practical steps are needed to improve women status in Pakistan. The Government should take necessary measures to enhance women labour force participation. Pakistan is facing a serious economic crises ~~consequently~~ in the current scenario. Without utilizing almost half of its total population, Pakistan cannot meet the modern challenges. Bangladesh is an important example in this regard which utilizes its women population to the maximum. ~~According to~~ <sup>It is</sup> ~~is~~ estimated that the women labour force participation has increased from 21% to 42% from 1990 to 2022 in Bangladesh which contributed to its economic growth and development. The Benazir Income support Program is providing financial support to the needy women but it cannot make them independent. By providing them a useful source of income ~~and~~ like sewing machine, embroidery skills etc, ~~we~~ <sup>they</sup> can be made useful and productive citizens.

It is very important to give special attention to the woman's education. An educated women play an important role in the training of children and make a whole society useful. Our Holy Prophet (PBUH) said, "A man's education is a person's education and a woman's education is a society education." So, the development

of whole society depends upon the women. Government should increase the number of schools and colleges to promote women education. The government should ensure free of cost education for all children including girls.

Mass awareness is needed on national level to reduce socio cultural barriers. The Panchayat, Jirga systems can be discouraged by making a strong Judicial system. Media, Civil society should play a positive role to discourage socio cultural hindrances.

In a book "Manufacturing consent" by Noam Chomsky, the role of media is ~~very important~~ very important in making perception. It portrays women as house wife, doing household tasks and man as a bread earner. The women harassment, Honor killings and child marriages can be discouraged by mass awareness.

~~Timely~~ The laws related to women protection and safeguard and women rights should be implemented at its true sense. Timely and prompt Justice should be provided to the victims and government should provide them security and shelter. This will reduce fear of being killed among women. Strict punishments should

be given to the culprits and make it a lesson for others. The violence against women can also only be reduced by proper implementation of laws and true Justice.

In conclusion, women empowerment in Pakistan is very essential for economic and social development of the country. Quaid-e-Azam said "No struggle can be successful without women participating side by side with men." Pakistan is facing many challenges, which can be successfully dealt by women empowerment and participation in all aspects of life.