

# Gender Equality: A Popular Slogan

## Outline:

### 1) Introduction :

The word gender equality has become a cliché but still it is an eye opening subject for Pakistan and world. Why or How gender equality <sup>is only a slogan.</sup> has remained just a popular slogan, this question ~~remains~~ can be answered by highlighting the factors responsible for gender disparity in Pakistan i.e. lack of education, extremism, upbringings of males etc.

### 2) How gender equality is only a popular slogan and not practically seen.

- a) Lack of education
- b) Unemployment on gender basis
- c) Poor health facilities for women
- d) Sexual harassment at work places
- e) Gender based violence.

### 3) Way forward to promote gender equality

a) Promoting or making subject of gender studies compulsory for all students.

b) Role of media in promoting gender equality

c) Arranging seminars to promote gender equality.

d) Law making for women protection

### 4) Conclusion

Essay:

The word gender equality has become a cliché but still it is an eye opening subject for Pakistan and world. How gender equality is only a slogan can be answered by keeping / highlighting the factors responsible for gender disparity in Pakistan i.e. lack of education, extremism, upbringing of males etc. Because society is made of all the genders and by teaching males about respect of women and other genders can bring change in the society.

Shackles of gender inequality can be seen in the foot of Pakistani society too.

Although gender inequality is a worldwide issue and it should be addressed on an international level. But Pakistan is unfortunately <sup>not</sup> in good books of international community. Because as per <sup>global</sup> gender gap report issued by world economic forum Pakistan is on 142 number out of 146 countries in gender equality. Few countries after Pakistan in this list are Iran, Afghanistan, Chad and Algeria. It is unfortunate that still country has not done much for betterment of gender equality.

Now the question which makes the debate worth reading is that how gender equality has remained a slogan only. There are multiple factors attached to it. But the most common which are prevailing in our country and which are responsible for gender gap

is education, social perspective, extremism, relying on home based education for girls etc. The story does not end here. Even from a global perspective, gender inequality was seen in recent United Nations General Assembly session where only 04 women were present in the assembly hall. And the speech of the Secretary General started with the words of "we the men", instead of "we the people". It means gender inequality is a global issue and not the national one.

In Pakistan, gender inequality is very common and the first factor responsible for the said issue is education. It is astonishing to see that 23 million children of Pakistan are out of school and out of which 16 million are girls. Similarly as per World Bank report, seconded by the Bureau of statistics, the two most affected provinces of Pakistan are Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and

Balochistan where the illiteracy of the children out of school are 58 and 78% respectively. It is perhaps unfortunate that our country which is struggling to fulfill the SDG's are lagging behind in the field of education. The international benchmark set by the United Nations is that at least 04% of the GDP should be spent in the field of education. But unluckily we are promoting national songs by saying that

we have to educate the children of our enemies. But those enemy i.e. our neighboring country is spending 2.1% of their GDP on education and we who are planning to educate enemy's children are spending just 1.7% of our GDP on education. So, until or unless, state does not take education's importance serious, this issue will remain as it is.

Another factor that contributes the gender inequality is unemployment. Gender equality has become only a slogan because it has been observed that in our patriarchal society, women are not empowered and they are not allowed to step out of their homes. The patriarchal society has also confined jobs with gender. e.g. women are only confined to desk jobs like receptionists etc. They are objectified and are being

considered as a show piece or an object who can attract the other gender. Similarly few jobs like road hostess, air hostesses etc are preferred to females just to attract other gender and for expansion of businesses. It is said that women hold half of the sky but in Pakistan the numbers is less than half of those women who are working. According to world inequality report, Pakistan has been ranked on 143<sup>rd</sup> number out of 146 countries having lowest female labours. It is pertinent to mention here that not only females have to face this issue, transgenders are also on the same track. The problems faced by the Pakistani females are no more separate or

different from those being faced by the transgenders. It is worth mentioning here that transgenders or the third genders are added here because gender equality is not confined to a specific gender, rather it talks about liberty and freedom of every gender living in the society. Women are abused economically by paying less and putting more load on them i.e. less pay and more working hours.

Similarly poor health facilities for females are also a basic cause for making gender equality only a slogan. As per Global digital report, Pakistan has third highest death rates of females giving birth to children. Similarly, the key factor which increases this number is less female paramedical staff availability in <sup>both</sup> urban and rural hospitals. Females from far flung areas hesitate to be checked by a male gynaecologist. In fact in few areas of Pakistan, they are given treatment at home by quacks because the women are not allowed to go out. It is embarrassing that as per World Bank report, Pakistan is on 132<sup>nd</sup> number out of 146 countries in the field of health.

Women have to face harassment at work places. Mere passing of gender protection bills from the Parliament is not enough to curb this bitter truth that women have to face harassment at their work places. They are

not being offered or given any key post. As per Global gender gap report only 05% of Pakistan women are holding some key positions. Unluckily, the gender equality in our patriarchal society is considered by objectifying and commercializing the women on bill boards but this is not sufficient. In fact, considering women as an object is also kind of harassment.

Then a horrible factor that tarnishes the image of a country is gender based violence. The recent Rijwana's case is an eye opening case for whole society where a minor girl was brutally tortured by her owner. The more shocking fact was that she was being tortured by wife of a judge who is responsible to give justice to the people. Another case was reported of a minor girl who was not only tortured by a land lord's son-in-law but was also sexually assaulted. Rijwana however survived and the innocent girl is going through convalescence but the latter did not survive and died due to the atrocity and torture she faced.

The problem lies with the less representation of females at the Parliament. Our country has to learn from our neighboring country who are increasing the <sup>33%</sup> seats of women in Lok Sabha. But unluckily the female representatives in the Parliament of Pakistan are mostly from elites and they do not understand the problems being

faced by an ordinary or a middle-class or poor woman.

The above discussed issues can be addressed by making similar laws like "Harassment protection at work place" so that the females could work freely and independently. Similarly representation be given to females of lower class, so that they could redress the grievances of a common woman. The number of female representatives should also be increased in order to address the issues at a larger forum.

Similarly gender studies or gender based subject be made compulsory for every student and it should be taught at lower class level so that the child should respect other genders, whether they are female or transgenders.

It is pertinent to mention here that job opportunities be created for females so that they could stand on their own feet and be able to live an independent life.

Female staff should be added to health care department, police stations etc so that women should freely address their issues.

Media is considered as the fifth pillar of the state. The said pillar should be utilized positively to build a positive image of woman instead of making her half nude and displaying her in advertisement and commercials. It is also duty of the state to put a check on media and stop it.

from objectifying the women. Similarly, workshops, seminars be arranged for gender equality in order to reduce this gap. In this way, our country will progress in the race of gender disparity.

In the end, it should be said that the present situation of woman in Pakistan is alarming for those activists and feminists who come up on roads of the capital and display some controversial placards and banners each year, rather they should practically work for the betterment of women of Pakistan. Females like Justice Ayesha A. Malik, Malala Yousofzai, Shimeen Obaid Chennai etc are the assets of our country. And we hope to see such more faces in near future for promoting a positive image of Pakistan and to reduce this gender based gap.