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English Essay Practice

"Development is Linked to Gender Parity"

Outline

1. Introduction

2. Understanding Gender Parity

2.1 Definition of the Concept

2.2 Importance of Gender Parity

3. Ways in which Gender Parity is Linked with Development

3.1 Economic Development

a) Gender parity in labour force leads to higher productivity and innovation (e.g., promoting gender parity could add \$14 trillion to Global GDP by 2025 - McKinsey)

b) Reducing gender gaps in wages and employment reduces poverty rates (e.g., increasing women employment rates could reduce poverty by 20% - World Bank)

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c) Equal opportunities for men and women promotes long-term economic sustainability

3.2 Social Development

a) Gender parity in healthcare leads to better health outcomes for women and children (e.g., increased gender parity in healthcare reduces maternal and child mortality rates - WHO)

b) Gender parity in education promotes social mobility, social cohesion, and reduced poverty (e.g., Every additional year of education for girls increases national income by 0.37% - UNESCO)

c) Reduction in social inequalities through inclusive development and equitable laws leads to societal harmony

3.3 Political Development

a) Gender parity in political representation strengthens democracy and governance (e.g., Rwanda with highest female parliamentary representation has seen increased political stability)

b) Women participation in peace agreements are more durable (e.g., peace agreements with female signatories are 35% more likely to

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Last for 15 years - UN)

- c) Gender parity in leadership roles promotes unity and reduces political polarisation

4. Barriers to Achieving Gender Parity

- 4.1 Deeply entrenched patriarchal cultural norms restrict women participation in multiple domains

- 4.2 In majority developing countries, girls face barriers to accessing education (e.g., UNESCO reported that 129 million girls are out of school due to social, economic, cultural barriers)

- 4.3 Gender discrimination at work places hinders women's progress (e.g., ^{Global} Gender pay gap is 16%)

- 4.4 Insufficient legal frameworks to protect women from discrimination (e.g., only 40% countries have fully implemented laws protecting women from workplace discrimination - World Bank)

5. Remedies for Achieving Gender Parity and Promoting Development

- 5.1 Promoting gender parity and women's

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Participation through education and awareness campaigns (e.g. awareness campaigns can increase female school enrollment by ISY - UNESCO)

5.2 Undertaking initiatives to support women's economic participation and financial independence (e.g., Case Study of Bangladesh: Garment industry and women)

5.3 Policy reforms through gender quota in political representation, equal pay legislation, and gender-sensitive policies. (e.g., Case Study of Sweden: Gender Parity Through Reforms)

6. Conclusion

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Essay - Full Length

Gender parity is crucial for development, as it contributes to economic growth, social progress, and political stability by leveraging the potential of both men and women equally. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, founding father of Pakistan, famously said, "No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you." This equality, however, seems absent in majority developing countries.

The lack of development is correlated with absence of gender parity. Countries that have higher gender gap have lower rates of development in economic and social terms.

Moreover, nations that do not focus on gender parity have weaker political development.

Gender parity remains a distant phenomenon for majority nations due to the cultural norms and institutionalised discrimination within the society. It is important to note that when gender parity is discussed, the female gender is primarily focused on

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because women lack the fair share of opportunities and representation. Mitigating the barriers to gender parity requires awareness, initiatives, gender-sensitive policy making and legal frameworks which protect victims of gender discrimination.

The concept of gender parity primarily refers to equal participation, treatment, and representation of men and women in various sectors. The concept is applied in education, employment, political participation, and decision-making. Gender parity is measured by the World Economic Forum's index known as the Global Gender Index. The index measures gender parity across health, education, economy, and politics. As per the index, Iceland has the smallest gender gap and ranks 1 while Afghanistan has the widest gender gap and is ranked at the last position.

Gender parity is interconnected with economic development. The absence of gender parity in labour force leads to negative impact on economic development.

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If men and female are provided equal opportunities in the labour force, the country would experience higher productivity and innovation. The reasoning behind this is that increased competition in the labour force leads to higher performances and contributes in providing higher levels of productivity. Moreover, McKinsey Global Report stated that promoting gender parity could add \$12 trillion to global GDP by 2025.

Reducing gender gaps in wages and employment opportunities is a key objective of gender parity. By providing equal wages and opportunities, the rate of poverty in the country can reduce significantly. The reason behind this is that the women who are actively participating in the labour force would not be exploited and paid higher wages as their male counterparts receive. Secondly, providing employment opportunities allows higher women participation in the economy allowing poverty alleviation.

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The World Bank reported that increasing women employment rates could reduce poverty by 20%.

Equal economic opportunities for men and women promotes long-term economic sustainability. As per the World Bank, gender parity in economic participation contributes in increasing national productivity and output; the two measures which are vital for economic growth and sustainability. This can be observed in Nordic countries like Sweden and Ireland which have attained high levels of economic growth and sustainability by reducing gender parity. Economic development requires long-term economic sustainability which can be achieved through creation of equal opportunities for men and women.

Attaining strong social development requires gender parity. Equal treatment of men and women is crucial for better health outcomes. Ensuring gender parity in health care would

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allow increased life expectancy for men and women which is an important component for Human Development Index (HDI) that ranks countries based on human development. As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), increased gender parity in healthcare reduces maternal and child mortality rates. A relevant example is of Afghanistan which ranks last in gender parity, 180th out of 191 on HDI and has below global average life expectancy for women.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR - 1948) under Article 26 mentions the right to education for every human as a basic right. Gender discrimination based on access to education neglects this right. Gender parity in education promotes social mobility, social cohesion, and reduced poverty rates. Education is also a key component of the HDI which classifies average years of education as a measure to determine human development. Pakistan has a low literacy rate for

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which stood at 46.5%, and even this figure is not as per the standards defined by HDI. Therefore, Pakistan ranks 161st out of 191 countries on HDI and is classified as a low development country. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reported that every additional year of education for girls could potentially increase national income by 0.37%.

Inclusivity and equitable.
Laws counter social inequalities such as access to education and healthcare for women. For development in a society or nation there is need for societal harmony. However, societal harmony cannot coexist with societal inequalities towards a gender which is mostly women and on average 50% of the population of every country. Societal harmony cannot exist with inequitable laws either as the neglect of one gender indicates the elimination of justice under the ^{legal} framework.

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The concept of democracy revolves around the principle of equality.

Equality in political terms means equal representation and participation. Therefore,

to achieve a strong democracy, ensuring gender parity in political representation is vital. In Pakistan, women have 20%

seats in the National Assembly. Recently,

Pakistan stood at 101 out of 167 on the

Economist Democracy Index. Moreover, absence

of gender parity is also a cause of poor governance which becomes a cause of

political instability. Rwanda has the

highest female parliamentary representation

which has led to increased political stability

in the country post-conflict. Currently,

61% of parliamentarians in Rwanda are

women indicating social and democratic progress.

As per research by the

United Nations, women participation

in peace agreements is more effective

and durable indicating their political

importance in diplomacy. UN reported

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that peace agreements with female signatories is 35% more likely to last for 15 years. The success of women in diplomatic relations indicates the necessity of women in politics which reflects their importance in achieving political development.

Gender parity in leadership roles promotes unity and reduces political polarisation. Leadership roles have predominantly been acquired by males due to which political polarisation has increased in recent times due to the feminist movement. Women believe that due to the absence of female leaders in the political arena, their voice, interests and demands have been suppressed. Currently, only 29 countries out of 193 have political leaders which are women. The lack of women representation in leadership has fuelled political polarisation within society over the recent few decades leading to reduced unity within society. The lack of social cohesion and political polarisation, hinders political development.

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The existence of patriarchy means that the world is male dominated.

Due to deeply entrenched patriarchal cultural norms which have been passing from century to century, the concept of gender parity seems alien to majority.

Increasing women participation in different domains such as economic or political aims to change the status quo and cultural norms. Due to this, the opposition towards women participation ^{and} representation is opposed and restricted. Strict restrictions are observed primarily in conservative and traditionalist societies such as Afghanistan and Pakistan; this is reflected on the lowest side of Global Gender Gap.

Developing nations have low incomes, development, ~~and~~ literacy rates and their societies are usually more conservative in nature. Due to lack of funds and awareness, girls in developing countries face major hurdles in the access of education. UNESCO reported that 129 million girls are out of schools and

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Social, economic, and cultural barriers.

Provided the conservative nature of society, the economic conditions, and traditionalist cultural values, access to education at equal levels for men and women remains a distant goal.

The world is advocating for equal wages regardless of gender.

However, despite the claims, gender discrimination remains prevalent at

workplaces. The absence of equal pay is a major factor contributing towards lower women progress. In 2023, the

Global Gender Pay Gap stood at 16% and in South Asia specifically it was 35%.

The existence of pay differences on the basis of gender is a demotivating factor for women contribution in the workforce.

~~and~~ Legal frameworks which protect women from discrimination are mostly insufficient and have been created without proper female participation.

Moreover, even if legal frameworks exist, their implementation remains a major

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barriers especially in developing nations. The absence of a proper legal framework which safeguards women interests and rights has been a major factor in causing discrimination. According to The World Bank, only 40% countries have fully implemented laws which protect women from workplace discrimination. The absence of 60% countries indicates flawed legal system which disregards equality which is vital to attain social development and progress towards gender parity.

Increasing gender parity, as discussed, requires changing cultural norms and practices. By utilising education and employing awareness campaigns the need, importance, and impact of gender parity needs to be promoted. Education would allow acceptance towards gender parity while awareness campaigns would help people understand its importance. UNESCO reported that awareness campaigns can increase female school enrollment by 15%. Therefore, increased

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Female school enrollment would increase progress towards gender parity leading to higher educational development and improved HDI.

Initiatives and programs which are focused on supporting women's economic participation are vital. The government needs to play a major role in introducing such initiatives to attain gender parity in economic development. This would allow increased women participation and representation in the workforce and would increase the financial independence of women. Financial independence would allow women to break away from the cultural norms and challenge the patriarchal society to attain equality.

Bangladesh took initiatives to enhance gender parity in the garment industry by promoting women participation leading to employment of millions^{of} women. Today, these women contribute significantly to the country's economic growth and the garment industry exports stand at \$47bn.

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Achieving gender parity in the political, social, and economic spheres to attain development needs policy sectors. The government needs to ensure women participation in politics by introducing a proper gender quota. Moreover, there should be equal pay legislation and gender-sensitive policies which are comprehensive in nature and implemented.

Sweden today stands at the 5th position of Global Gender Index. The country attained gender parity through gender quota in politics along with equal pay legislation while ensuring accessibility to education.

The high level of gender parity has contributed towards the development of Sweden which stands at 30th position in terms of GDP.

Development indeed is linked with gender parity. After assessing the case study of Sweden and Iceland, the impact of gender parity on development can be witnessed. ~~Through~~ ^{in Afghanistan} The absence of gender parity depicts the other side

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where, human development and economic development remains at the lower stage.

Gender parity is a misunderstood and neglected topic in the developing world and cultural and social barriers have restricted the countries in attaining the equality. As a result these countries have faced lower levels of economic development, lack of social cohesion, and political instability.

Moving forward, such nations need to mitigate the barriers to achieve gender parity in all domains of life to capitalize on the potential prospects offered by this objective.