

# Essay: Gender Parity in Leadership: Bridging the Global Gap

## Outline

Focus on deconstruction of the topic

Rest is fine

### I. Introduction

Thesis statement: Gender parity has become a buzzword because gender inequality exists at concerning levels. This contrast is equally evident in leadership roles around the world. However, such a gap did not always exist and is therefore, bridgeable.

### II. Debunking the terms 'gender' and 'gender parity'

### III. From matriarchal to patriarchal societies: A historical perspective

### IV. Status of gender equality at household level.

Irrelevant details

A. Intersex: The outlier in leadership.

1. 1.7% of world population (UN)

B. Woman at home: More of a subordinate rate than a leader

1. Pakistani women decide for

only 32.2% (1/3rd) of their needs (PIDE).

Connect these arguments with authority or leadership role

### V. What gender parity would look like at societal level

A. The subjugated role of women in workplace

1. Pakistan ranked 145/146 in gender parity index.

B. Women in politics: A rare sight.

1. Pakistani female voter turnout was 41% in 2024 while their role in executive

This is the main part of the topic, add more arguments

V. To what extent are genders at par in global leadership

A. Meager representation of women in international summits.

1. BRICS and SCO summits

B. Non-existent involvement of women in global great games

1. Absence of women leadership in leading countries and their male-dominated global decisions.

VI. Way forward: Bridging the global gender gap.

A. Charity begins at home.

1. Teaching children about responsibility and acceptability.

2. putting women and intersex in decision-making positions

1. Beginning from their own needs

## B. Changing society's view of fixed leadership roles.

1. Awareness campaigns and education programmes, Eg: UN Women
2. Increasing the quota of underrepresented genders in politics.
  1. currently it is 21% in Pakistan and 30% in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## C. Taking action at a global level

1. promoting women and intersex participation in regional and supranational decisions.
2. The developed nations aiding the less developed ones in coping with gender discrimination.

## VII. Conclusion

## Gender Parity in Leadership: Bridging the Global Gap

Both genders and roles are socially constructed. Therefore, this man-made makeup has assigned the role of leadership predominantly to men. Gender parity has become a buzzword because gender inequality exists at concerning levels. This contrast is equally evident in leadership roles around the world. However, such a gap did not always exist and is, therefore, bridgeable.

When history is traced back to the beginning of humanity, the roles reverse. Surprisingly, societies were matriarchal and women <sup>use to make</sup> important decisions. Today, women and the other undermined genders like the intersex have negligible roles in authority. Beginning from home both women and other non-man genders have little to none authoritative powers.

At societal level, men are in leading positions be it in workplace or politics. Men also dominate the international arena; they lead international summits as a consequence of being national leaders. They also decide on global matters resulting in man-oriented decisions. Despite these challenges, the gender gulf can be bridged.

Starting from home, it is on the parents that they instill responsibility and acceptability in their children that any of them can lead regardless of their genders. Moreover, the women and the intersex must be put in decision-taking positions starting from their own needs. Further, more the society's view that leadership roles are fixed must be changed. This can be done through awareness campaigns and educational programmes. Also, the quota of the underrepresented genders must be increased and fixed in policies until equality is achieved. At global level, women participation in international decisions must be promoted and the countries with better gender equality status must help the ones with concerning gender discrimination. All in all, it is a concrete reality that there is a gender inequality in leadership. However, obvious problems have clearer solutions.

The term gender is often used interchangeably with sex. Nevertheless, gender is a social construct and sex is biologically assigned. Gender is what one identifies oneself as or how the society recognizes that person. To avoid

confusion, the term gender in this essay will be limited to three categories: man, woman, and intersex. Gender parity may thus be defined as equality among genders. This means that any capable man, woman or intersex may take up any responsibility or role without any discrimination. In case of leadership, if any of the above mentioned genders can take in a leading position without facing limitations based on who they are, hence, gender parity in leadership.

Today, societies, nations and supra-national entities are majorly led by men. However, this has not always been the case. Historians have written at length on how human society began in matriarchal setups. Women were to decide what went on in their houses and in society as a whole. They held the finances, decided on disputes, and proposed plans for those days. With the advent of agriculture, the roles began to shift. Men went out to farm and women were left to look after the house and children. The role of intersex remains ambiguous.

in history due to the lack of acceptance that they received. Thus, men took the authoritative role of women. They began to control the finances, look into disputes and decide what was supposed to be done. As the position grew strong roots the society changed into a patriarchal one and the trend has more or less sustained itself since.

The status of gender parity in leadership can be viewed from three different levels: -the household level, -the societal level and -the global level. The coming paragraphs will prove that there is no gender parity in leadership at all levels.

Both the intersex and women do not hold leading positions in household. As the most disregarded sex, the intersex are not normally accepted in their homes, let alone assuming leadership roles. The ratio of this gender is not negligible either. According to a report by UN's OHCHR, the intersex comprise 1.7% of global population. This means that about two in hundred people

are intersex. This figure is not negligible and when assuming no significant role in a family is condemnable. More often than not, it is the eldest male in the house who decides on the matters that concern their familial unit, often referred to as 'the third gender'. The intersex either live a life away from their families or remain in the house as an outcast, thus having no role in authority.

Women in their homes are also <sup>more</sup> in a subjugated position than a leading one. Beginning from her birth where in many families boys are more wanted as offsprings, a girl faces discrimination in multiple ways. More often than not, the boy is given the better treatment than his sibling of opposite gender. This inculcates in the minds of both that boys are the superior ones resulting in men seeing themselves in leading positions and women complying in subordination due to lack of confidence.

A study by PIDE revealed that only 32.2% per cent of one-third of women that too for their own needs are taken



by the women themselves. The lack of control of a woman even for her own personal matters explains why <sup>women</sup> they do not have any say in matters of the house.

At societal level, gender parity is nothing less than a myth. The intellect and greatly women have a rather subordinated role <sup>in workplaces</sup>. They are either offered pink collar jobs like air hostesses or relatively less responsible jobs in other sectors. Managerial positions are beyond the glass ceiling <sup>through which</sup> they can see but hardly achieve. Even for relatively advanced countries like China the state of gender inequality for women in workplaces is no better. As an activist for Chinese women rights recently remarked, "The women of the urban centres at least are offered glass ceiling jobs; but the women of the rural areas have nothing but iron ceilings over them." Such statements come from states assumed advanced in women development. The situation is worse in countries like Afghanistan with rampant gender apartheid and Pakistan which ranked 145 out of 146 in the gender parity

index of 2024.

Other than besides the compromise of women in workplaces, their domination in politics is also a rare sight. Although their role as chief executives have been glimpsed in the past instanced by Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan and Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom. These glimpses have remained short-lived and often followed by criticism and character assassination. It is a deplorable state of how, when men get in their leadership positions are judged by their achievements or short-comings while for women, their character is also evaluated to grade her performance. This may be one reason why women, in many cases keep away from politics. Nationally, the reports of women leadership do not support gender parity. The results of 2024 elections of Pakistan revealed that female voter turnout was 41% of the total voters. A relevant report showed that women comprise only 4.5% of senior executive and legislative positions. Thus in politics too

gender inequality indubitably evident.

Furthermore, the gulf in global leadership between the genders is wide. International summits have become a norm and rightly a necessity of the ongoing time. Every other day a conference by the name of AIC, or SCO or even BRICS covers the news. How often are women seen representing the country? It is understood, that most of these summits are attended by the heads of the states who are, again not surprisingly mostly men, but when a premier decides to send a representative on his behalf as witnessed in case of India when Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent Jaishankar, was it supposed to be a man? But then, even so Jaishankar was a next to the prime Minister in diplomatic line, why could it not be a woman in that case? The answers to all these questions are deep-rooted taking one back to the discrimination at household level. The gender gap, thus, is significant at international level.

The world order is decided by the highly developed and technologically and economically advanced countries. These countries of course are led by the head of the governments of the respective states. This means what course the global trends take depend upon these leaders. These leaders, to name the influential countries as United States, United Kingdom, Russia, China, Japan and even Israel these days, are all led by men. Subsequently, the decisions of the world are directly or indirectly taken by men. Today, the world is in a very volatile situation. Any misstep may end in a nuclear war which as Brian Barry predicted could be the cause of the end of life on Earth by the year 2100. The disparity in leadership has culminated into male-dominated global decisions.

Nevertheless, however wide this gender gap may be, it is still bridgable with initiatives taken at household, societal and international levels respectively, gender

parity in leadership can be achieved.

The change must begin at home. The parents are responsible for teaching their children about acceptability and responsibility. Children learn very quickly from their environment and especially from their parents. Supported by the Freudian theory, the youngsters idealize their parents and are easily inspired from them. The boys must be taught about accepting their siblings of opposite gender be them girls or intersex. The girls and the 'third gender' must be encouraged to speak for themselves and take stand where needed. There is no doubt that confidence and overconfidence come from home. It is highly dependent on one's environment, what position in life one assumes; whether to lead or submit. Thus if children are conditioned such that they feel confident and responsible irrespective of their gender, then the gap can be bridged in a speedy manner.

Furthermore, it is pertinent that the genders other than men are brought to the spotlight due to the prolonged cornering they

have faced or what they find normal to face. As the PIDE study had revealed that women decided for only one-third of their needs, it is a necessity that they are brought to the decision-taking position initially for their own needs. Once they assume a role which must inarguably be theirs in the first place, only then can they be confident in having a say in other matters of the house. When they realize their needs and understand what it means to lead one's own life, they can then take the charge of taking the responsibility of sensibly deciding for others.

Bridging the gulf at a societal level will require the participation of the society as a whole. This means that it becomes the responsibility of not only those who aim to bring parity but also of others to be welcoming of this initiative. For this reason, awareness campaigns and educational programmes must be run to enforce a sense of gender parity in leadership.

Such steps are not alien, neither are they impossible. An initiative in this matter in Pakistan for instance was evidenced in 2017 by United Nations Women when it called women from all districts of Balochistan, discussed their issues and lack of leadership from them. It also dispersed a substantial fund to those women highlighting financial dependence as the obstacle on their way to leading position. More programmes like these work around the globe in all kinds of societies. What they need further is more stern objectives to promote gender equality in leadership.

Additionally, the much-debated quota system must be increased and enforced for women in politics. Those who oppose quota do so on the grounds that it undermines merit and give weightage to genders. However, in societies where the gap is significantly, mere merit will keep promoting a male-dominated society and women and other undermined genders will be further suppressed. The

fixed representation varies from country to country depending upon how significant the gap is. In Pakistan for example, the share of female parliamentarians is 21% whereas the figures in Sub-Saharan Africa is 30%. This is a necessity because otherwise the representation will be much less and will drop exponentially if kept suppressed. Therefore, such a system must be reinforced where it is weak so as to increase the number of non-male parliamentarians and subsequently future leaders.

Having substantially bridged the gap at household and national level, the gap will further reduce in the international level. However, direct macrolevel initiatives also need to be taken in order to speed up the equality process. Firstly, women participation must be promoted in region and supranational decision. This is very important because women participation in global decisions has been helpful in the past. One such



manifestation of women as pacifiers in global issues is the era of Margaret Thatcher and her dealing of the Falkland Island issue. Thus, by promoting women in globally important positions does not only work for the gender but also globe as a whole.

Secondly, greater women participation in leadership can be brought about by the more developed countries by helping the less developed ones. The aid can come in two ways: economic aid or working directly for women empowerment. For the first ones because economically weak countries are so engrossed in developmental issues that gender inequality is a secondary problem to many. Thus, by aid the economically these states will then be able to focus on gender-related issues. The assistance can be direct. The developed countries that top the gender parity index can promote women leadership by establishing women and other gender aid centres. They can then

educate women on leadership and encourage them to take a stand for themselves and other women around them.

In conclusion, gender parity <sup>in leadership</sup> does not exist at the moment. Women lag behind in taking decisions for themselves at their homes and thus assume no leading role in their personal space. In society, women leadership is a rare sight due to social stigma and other hurdles.

Internationally, it is the men who take the global decisions and not women. However, this gap can and must be bridged. Beginning at home, parents must groom their children that only merit and not gender decides who can lead. There must be educating programmes in society to inculcate acceptance of women leadership. Finally, women participation in international decision-making must be promoted through institutional acceptance and inter-state cooperation. Thus, as much as the gap exists, there are concrete ways in reducing it and making gender parity in leadership a reality.