

"Women Remain on the Losing side in Professional life"

OUTLINE

1 Introduction

Thesis statement: Despite progress, women still face obstacles and gender disparities in the workplace, hindering their advancement and creating disparities and imbalances in professional. However, in some cases women contribute equally to men in professional life, yet, women faces the glass ceiling, where they remain on losing side in the workplace.

2 Why Women are on Losing side in Profession life.

3 Prevailing Gender Biasness in Professional life (Thesis).

- a Biasness in hiring and promotion
- b Unequal pay in services.
- c Expectational societal norms impacts

women's career choices.

- d Harassment at work place.
- e Work-life balance kills their aspirations.

3 Women are treated equally in the work place. (Anti thesis).

- a Most of the women are at leadership positions.
- b Women are earning more based on their skills.
- c Personal experiences play significant role in their career choices.
- d Organizations prioritize safe working environment for women.
- e Women have choices to balance work-life or domestic life.

4 Women are still far to be equal to men. (Synthesis).

- a Only privileged women are given the chance at better positions.
- b Gap in earning is smaller, but still significant.
- c Advancement is usually hindered by family and societal barriers.
- d Women are discriminated based on their gender.
- e They have to maintain both work and domestic lives.

5 Conclusion

There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a great competition and rivalry between the two. There is a third power stronger than both, that of woman. (Muhammad Ali Jinnah)

The above mentioned quote highlights the power of women. However, her inherent strength, it's unfortunate that women still face challenges and remain losing side of professional life. Despite the progress in world, women face obstacles and gender disparities that hinder their advancements. However, in some cases women contribute equally to men in professional life. Yet, women faces the grim situation, where they remain on the losing side in workplace. Prevailing gender biasness in professional life is evident in their hiring and promotion, unequal wages, societal norms that hinder the women's growth, harassment at work places and the work-life balance they bear, kills their aspiration. Although, the opponents emphasize the equality of women in work places as most of them are on leadership positions, earning more, have their

personal preferences in choosing the careers, respected and treated well by their male colleagues and work life balance is based on their own choices. Yet, the women's status and disparity to them in the professional life is more persistent.

Women play a crucial role in fostering the progress and development of any country, serving as an integral part of the society that is essential for the smooth functioning of the society. In Pakistan, women constitutes 49 percent of total population, representing a diverse range of cultures, languages and ideologies. However, the roles women play or their participation in different sectors of profession is less of their population and in most cases is limited to household. Gender inequality is an issue that is common in almost every part of the world and Pakistan is in no exception in this case. Cultural norms and societal practices limit women's choices and opportunities of work advancement and it push them on the back seat in the professional life. The challenges:

women face in their lives hinders the progress. This is the reason that women still encounter significant challenges that prevent them from participating in the workforce equally.

Gender disparity and biasness is prevalent in almost all walks of life. Women feel left out due to the discrimination they face. However the women are crucial parts of the society and nearly accounts half of total population yet the opportunities they are given are limited. Society discriminate the women on the basis of their gender and this discrimination in the professional life keeps them on the losing side.

According to UN Women Asia and Pacific report about Pakistan, Women accounts for a mere 22.63 percent of the Labor force, while, men makes 84.79 percent of Labor force.

These figures highlight the grim and murky picture of women in their professional life where most of women are restricted in their homes and the ones who are in professional life are not promoted on higher -

positions considering them less competitive than men.

Similarly, women there exist a pay gap where women are paid less for doing the same work. This disparity can be attributed to various factors including occupational segregation, discrimination and biases in hiring, promotion and salary negotiation. These are the systematic hurdles that deprive the women accessing equal positions in the society. According to a report of UN Women, Asia and the Pacific, on average, a Pakistani woman's income is 16.3% of man's income.

Women earn just PKR 3K-4K on average. Thus, as a result, women face multidimensional vulnerabilities including low income, ^{security} dependency on their male counterparts, poor protection, occupational health issues, lack of social protection and high economic vulnerability at the time of crisis.

Moreover, the cultural norms, societal expectations, patriarchal mindset and the gender-discriminatory policies impact the

women's career choices. Women are not even given the chance to enter into the professional life, because of the patriarchal mindset, and sometimes the religion is also misinterpreted, keeps the women inside the four walls. Additionally, the societal norms limit the girls to enter either in medicine field or to opt for teaching without their own consent. Impediments to female's career advancements and discrimination are more pronounced in the developing countries and under developed nations.

According to the McKinsey Global Institute (2017), women represent a large part of untapped labor as compared to men. Thus, it

shows that either the women are underrepresented or they are expected that women should prioritize family and caregiving responsibilities over their careers. This can lead them to choose the paths that are perceived as more flexible or family oriented friendly, which may result in fewer career advancements.

Furthermore, 'harassment' has become an integral part of the vocabulary, discussed in mainstream

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media, fiercely debated in both private and public spheres. Workplace harassment is so common in these days that it forces the women to quit their respected profession. This harassment is hierarchical, thus those in positions of power harass, intimidate and silence subordinate is quite likely. Women are expected to be submissive due to patriarchal norms either they are in homes or in their professions, they have to face harassment in different forms.

Thus, it can be said that the harassment not only keeps the women on losing side of profession but also it impacts their mental health and leading them to harassment trauma.

Also, the work-life balance that a woman has to face kills her aspiration. She always has to live a compromised life, balancing her work as well as her family responsibilities. Women are always expected to bear double burden as a caregiver and as a breadwinner. Managing the multiple responsibilities which usually are not appreciated in

a true sense, a woman has to keep her aspirations at the end. Prioritizing the domestic responsibilities either a woman has to choose the career and profession that is family friendly, or she has to kill her aspirations of becoming on high managing and leadership positions b/c it is often perceived that women are not committed entirely to their profession and that the higher positions require the individuals to possess certain traits such as aggression, strong and fully committed. Thus, this perception further perpetuates the woman stereotype that keeps the women inside homes and ~~stop~~ kill their aspirations.

However, on the flip side women are also treated equally in the workplace. Women have also made the significant strides in leadership positions across the world. Breaking the barriers - women are assuming influential roles in business, politics, academia, and other sectors. For example, according to a study by Catalyst, women held 29% of senior

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management positions globally in 2020. Additionally, there are inspiring examples of women's in leadership positions who have achieved greater success and serving as a role model for future generations. Such as, Kamala Harris - Vice President of United States, Sheikh Hasina - PM of Bangladesh, Late Benazir Bhutto - PM of Pakistan. Thus, these are few examples that clearly indicates that women are making progress and are promoted to higher positions in all sectors.

Similarly, women's earning potential has been increasing based on their skills and qualifications. Women's educational attainment has been rising in the recent years and more women are entering in the professions that were previously dominated by men. This increased representation of women and their skill level contribute to women's ability for higher salaries and positions of authority. According to a report by Pew Research center, women's earning -

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increased by 58% from 1980 to 2018 in jobs placing the greatest emphasis on analytical skills. Thus, the rampant rise shows that the women are paid on the basis of their respective skills and helps them to get on the higher position.

Despite the societal and cultural norms, personal preferences of women in the recent times play a crucial role. While the external factors can influence and shape the decisions to some extent, ultimately, it is women's own choices, interests and preferences that guide them to the paths they want to pursue. Women, just like men have diverse talents, skills and passions that drive them towards the specific careers. Moreover, women are not restricted in their homes and caregiving responsibilities. In fact in the modern times where women are also on respected positions, both the partners bear the equal responsibilities and share the work burden equally. Therefore, more than the societal norms, women's personal preferences shape their career choices.

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While it's unfortunate that the workplace harassment exists, it's important to note that not all the workplaces have this issue. There are many organizations that prioritize the respect, equality and safe working environment for everyone including women. This leads to the positive and supportive environment and ~~creates~~ helps to foster the culture of inclusivity and equality. Many organizations have set the policies regarding the harassment which ensures that a woman must work in a safe environment. However, to tackle this issue effectively, a comprehensive approach and legal reforms are taken at state level in many countries. Such as, the Government of Pakistan has enacted laws to prevent and protect employees from harassment at workplace. **Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2012** adopted by the parliament of Pakistan to ensure the safe working environment. Conclusively, though the harassment at the workplaces exists, yet there are legal reforms, policies and rules of organizations that help to cater this issue effectively.

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Furthermore, work-Life Balance is based on individuals choices. As each person has their own choices, unique set of priorities, responsibilities aspirations. So, finding a right balanced way of work and life responsibilities is totally a personal choice. Women have their goals that extend beyond their professional lives. Its totally up to them, many may prioritize their careers and choose to dedicate more time and energy to their work-life while other may prioritize family personal interests or other aspects of life. Therefore, it is evident that although the women bear more and double responsibilities in their lives, but it is totally their choice that enter in professional life and manage their work and daily life balance.

While women are treated well and equally, yet, they are still far below from being equal in true sense with men. Only privileged women are given the priorities in accessing the certain opportunities. They have access to better education -

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might have an advantage in applying for that position. Women in backward areas still have the meagre opportunities and resources. Employment opportunities are far less for such women. Societal biasness and norms favor the women who are educated in top-tier schools, having the wide connections. Thus, this biasness clearly shows that women are still on the losing side in professional life as not all the women from all areas, and backgrounds are treated equally or not given the equal opportunities and status due to the prevailing socioeconomic conditions.

Although the progress has been made in reducing the gender gap, yet, there is still a significant gap that still exists. Factors such as occupational segregation, discrimination and biasness contribute to the gender pay gap. This can further leave a room for the gender inequality and keeps the women as far behind in the professional lives

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and increases their dependency on their male counterparts. It means the pay gap is a vicious cycle that can contribute the gender inequality. The Global wage report 2018-2019 by International Labor Organization (ILO) explains the gender pay gap variation b/w men and women b/w countries and Pakistan stands at about 34%. Therefore, though the earnings are based on the skills, yet there is the persistent pay gap based on genders.

Similarly, the greatest barrier in women's advancement is family, societal and patriarchal norms. Personal preferences of women in their career choices does not matter because they are often imposed the external decisions that hinder their progress and impact their personal choices. There is an evident example of many women who despite being educated at higher levels are kept inside homes and given the responsibilities

of a caregiver. Because, in a patriarchal society, it is perceived that women are meant to take charge of homes. This mindset has become a barrier for many women in pursuing their desired careers and make progress for themselves and for the country.

Despite the progress being made against the gender discrimination, by legal reforms and acts, but still there is persist gender based discriminations and harassment at workplaces. If woman is being respected or treated well, it is because of certain interests to harass the women by considering them as the weak entity emotionally. The evident examples of harassment against women such as in many cases they are given the over burden of work, not granted leaves or any verbal abuse against them keep them at the lowest point and under subordination. Although, there are certain policies and acts at state level to ensure the protection of women

at work places such as **Protection against women at work place Act, 2022**. But there is no proper implementation of these laws and policies which further enhances the chances of perpetrators to harass women. Because there is no stricter surveillance against those who discriminate women on the basis of their gender. Thus, there is still a stricter actions, surveillance and reforms are needed to ensure the protection of women.

Furthermore, though the women are economically independent and work on their own choice, yet, those who make the economic contributions to their household are still expected to fulfill their traditional gender roles. They have to perform the dual responsibilities, ~~they~~ such as the childcare, tasks of cooking, feeding, caring and cleaning that make life liveable for other family members are held the prime responsibilities of a woman. Therefore, it clearly indicates that despite

the benefits that come with the ability to earn, for women. Low socioeconomic backgrounds, working outside the house, taking dual responsibilities is still considered a double edged sword.

Conclusively, women who are the torch-bearers of the society, who are catalyst for the robust change in the existing narrow-minded society remain on the backseat in domestic as well as professional life. While the opponents are of the view that women enjoy the equal and treatment in the work-life. Yet, it is disheartening that though the progress has been made still women encounter the significant disparities and barriers which keep them on losing side of professional life. Therefore, it is crucial for society to continue striving for gender equality in work place. Promoting equal opportunities, fair pay, and curbing gender biasness and stereotypes. By fostering an inclusive environment women can be empowered professionally and contribute their valuable skills

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As the American technology executive, philanthropist and writer Sheryl Sandberg rightly stated that "We need women at all levels, including the top, to change the dynamic, reshape the conversation, to make sure women's voices are heard and heeded, not overlooked and ignored."