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"Gender Inequality in Pakistan"

In the Shakespeare play "The Merchant of Venice" character Shylock highlighted societal discrimination: "If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?" The prevalent gender inequality in Pakistan, in words of Shakespeare, owes to societal discrimination. The gender disparity in Pakistan is abominable. As women alongside transgenders are being treated unequally on multifaceted grounds: social, political and economic. There is a growing gap in employment opportunities much owing to glass ceiling. Concomitantly, women in politics remain at a back foot and gets

lacked with help of quota. Similarly, ^{lack of} health facilities has increased mortality rate of mothers and children. The impacts of gender inequality are immense. Gender based violence is one of them and it continues to haunt marginalised gender in Pakistan. Pakistan's rating on Gender Parity Index speaks volumes of gender inequality; Pakistan stands at 142 out of 146 countries. The question arises, why such an inordinate figure despite Pakistan's strong commitment to adhere democratic norms? A worm's eye view of Pakistan's patriarchal society helps in answering it. Patriarchy prevails from bottom to top in all spheres and is deeply ingrained in society, further posing serious challenges in overcoming gender inequality. However, not all is lost, gender inequality could be abated. The silver lining lies in farsightedness. The panacea to this discrimination lies in pragmatism; pragmatism lies in smart choices; and smart choice lies in absolute compliance of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Concerted efforts are required to abolish patriarchy, empower women, and achieve gender parity.