



KINZA-OB 60

Outline

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Introduction

- a. Hook
- b. Supporting Sentences
- c. **Thesis Statement:-**

Although the government of Pakistan is working for the empowerment of women but still the success rate is insignificant.

Main Body

It is Reality

1. On Economic Grounds

- a. Women seats in jobs
- b. Pension to widow
- c. Right of inheritance. (Article 23, 24)

2. Political Status

- a. Right to vote
- b. Participation in National Assembly
- c. Participation in General Elections
- d. Reservation of women's seats

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3. Status in Education sector

- a. Right to Education
- b. Technical and Vocational training
- c. Separate educational institutions

4. Muslim family laws Ordinance, 1961

- a. Right to khul'la
- b. Custody of children
- c. Right to get Maintenance

5. Government implications in empowerment

- a. Checks on domestic violence
- b. Dar-ul-aman
- c. Role of NGOs in raising awareness

It is a Myth

1. On Economic Grounds

- a. Negligible seats
- b. Gender Pay gap
- c. Financial violence
- d. Women earning is not considered good

2. Political Participation

- a. Ignored in decision making process
- b. Political careers inherited from families
- c. Dismissal of electoral rights of women by tribal and feudal structures.

3. Problems with Vocational education

- a. lack of skilled trainers
- b. Weak infrastructure
- c. Inadequate co-ordination between the formal TVET sector and industry

4. Failure to enforce laws

- a. Progress of cases is considerably slow
- b. Incomplete investigations
- c. Corruption and bribery

5. No Proper Checks and Balance

- a. Lack of medical equipment
- b. lack of general facilities
- c. lack of inspection and regulation

6. Un-solved Problems

- a. Honor killing
- b. Women Trafficking
- c. Tribal tradition of Vani/Swara

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KINZA-OB60 ESSAY

"We are concerned that despite being functional theoretically, both the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) and the National Commission on the Status of Women are waiting to be provided resources for an efficient running." This is the statement of **Hina Jilani**, written in **Human Rights Commission of Pakistan Report 2022**. It can be clearly assumed that if the state herself is declaring its inefficiency in regards of human rights particularly women rights. How come one can say that Women empowerment is a reality in Pakistan? Although Pakistan is working for women empowerment by making her economically independent, by providing seats in political arena, by giving social status, by imposing laws and by making women welfare institutions and NGOs. Still, there is a dire need for a

dire need for a proper check and balance on economic grounds and on enforcing laws. Also, the problems with welfare institutions and inherited political participation still exist. Unless these issues are addressed properly, Pakistan can neither become prosperous nor respectable. Now this essay will discuss about the sectors in which Pakistan is working for the empowerment of women.

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First comes the empowerment of women on **economic grounds** where it can be seen that women are provided with specialized seats in each sector whether it is educational sector, health department or Civil Service sector. One can find plenty of women getting education and serving in teaching positions. They are excelling at primary, secondary, tertiary and even university level.

Same is the case in health department where once in a blue moon we see a male nurse otherwise the whole profession is female only sector. According to a recent article of **National Library of Medicine**, there are 271,560 medical doctors registered with PMC; among them (46.9%) are females, whereas 53.1% are male doctors." This is pretty much an equal contribution of both genders. Also, the Civil Service sector reserves seats for women in approximately all the twelve departments. On one hand women are provided with jobs and on the other hand government give pension to widows to make them economically independent. Even the constitution of Pakistan under **Article 23 and 24A** gives women the right of inheritance and that no women shall be deprived of her share from inheritance.

Besides making women financially independent, Political arena is another realm where the empowerment seems realistic. Women as equal citizen of Pakistan are free to contest general elections and to be elected to any public office at the national, provincial and local levels without any discrimination. They have a liberty to exercise their right to vote in all elections, general and by-polls, which they could since independence and rephrased in the **1956 constitution**. They can run for elections directly as well as through women's reserved quota. There is no legal compulsion on women to hold any highest public office. Pakistan has hosted women as the Prime Minister (Benazir Bhutto), Federal Minister (Begum Kulsum), Speaker of the National Assembly (Fehmida Mirza), and the Leader of the Opposition, etc. The **1973 constitution** reserved sixty (60) seats for women portraying the importance of women in policy making as well.

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In addition to status of women in political arena, the status of women in educational sector also proves the reality of women empowerment. As stated under Article 25 A of constitution; State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children (regardless of sex, race or caste) of the age five to sixteen years. The point to be noted here is that all children - male or female has the right to get education. In the same way Vocational education and training provides women with essential skills enhancing their employability, supporting their personal development and encouraging active citizenship. Based on the **Journal of social research development** (jsrd.org.pk) - "Vocational training has a positive effect on women's entrepreneurship, according to respondents, highlighting its significance in advancing gender equality and economic independence." These type of training is also improving the women's career opportunity. These vocational

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training institutions and even the schools for secondary and higher secondary education are built for women only. Separate campuses are been built by the government so that women can perform better and can make herself comfortable. All these measures have an effective role in the empowerment of women.

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Next thing that comes uniformly as an evidence of reality of women empowerment is the laws that are imposed time to time to secure women individually, socially and economically. Pakistan, being an Islamic state, has published a **Muslim family law ordinance** in the Gazette of Pakistan ensuring rights for women that are provided by Islam. This law provides women with the right to Khul'la, if she is unhappy with her marital life or her husband is abusive, she has an option to file case against her in-laws and ask for divorce as well.

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It is also stated in the ordinance that in case of divorce the ^{custody of} children of the age one to eighteen will be given to the mother. (if the consent of mother is involved). Also, the women is provided with the right to get maintenance from her ex-husband. The laws stated earlier are from only one ordinance. There is **a total of 207 laws**, 62 federal and 145 provincial, **that were enacted in 2022** relating to women. The government of Pakistan is striving for the empowerment of women by all possible means.

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Finally, the implications of government are also making women's empowerment a reality. A Toll-Free **Helpline # 1043** has been established by the Government of Pakistan for taking complaints such as victim and survivor of violence, gender base discrimination and violation of basic human rights etc. Once the complaint is lodged, it

is to be followed up by the government officials through advice from the Chairperson **PCSW** (The Punjab Commission on the status of women).

The **Social Welfare Department**

has also established Dar-ul-Aman (Women Shelter Homes) that

provides protection, institutional care, Free medico-legal aid and

Psychological support such as counseling sessions. Additionally, many

shelters offer a variety of other services to help women and their

children including vocational training and legal guidance. They are supported

with government resources as well as non-profit funds. NGOs also work like

a catalyst to empower women from different side and to turn them into

mainstream society and economy. These NGOs provide awareness-raising of basic

human rights and all kinds violence against women. All these institutions are

valuable to battered women because they can help them find a sense of

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empowerment.

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So far this essay has shed light on those sectors where women empowerment is claimed. Now this essay would present the counter arguments to refute the premise that women empowerment is a reality.

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First comes on economic grounds where the participation of women is under question.

The Global Gender Gap Index Report 2022

ranked Pakistan at **145** out of **156** countries in terms of women's economic participation and opportunity.

This is actually a reality of so-called women empowerment.

Women are provided with less to no seats in various sectors wether we talk about civil service, politics, lawyers, Judges, software developers, engineers, architects, aircraft pilots, flight engineers and so on an unending list. Additionally,

"the gender wage gap in the country is estimated to be **34%** much higher than the average of **23%**," as stated by **IIPS**. Women pay compared to men is a glaring example of systemic discrimination and inequity that continues to persist in the country's workspace. In many cases, women are forced to hand over their earnings to their husbands or are not allowed to work leaving them financially reliant on their abusers. Many women who experience financial violence are unable to access basic necessities such as food, healthcare, or education for themselves and their children. The societal norms and cultural beliefs often dictate that women's earning is not acceptable. This mindset is deeply ingrained in patriarchal society, where women is traditionally expected as homemaker. Working women are often subjected to

scrutiny and gossip, with their intentions and morals questioned. Therefore, women empowerment seems a distant dream on economic grounds in Pakistan.

The second claim made for women empowerment was in the political arena of Pakistan. Women's participation in Pakistan's general elections remains nearly invisible with reserved seats often being allocated based on nepotism. The women legislators elected through indirect mode of election undermine their credibility and effectiveness as politicians. They are largely ignored in decision making process within their political parties and during the proceedings of the legislative assemblies for lack of their own electorate. There are five women in the history of Pakistan, namely Fatima Jinnah (PML), Benazir Bhutto (PPP), Nusrat Bhutto (PPP), Ginwa Bhutto and Nasim Wali Khan (ANP),

who has been the leaders of their respective political parties. However, all of them inherited their political careers from their brother, husband or father and subsequently emerged as politicians in their own right. Moreover, Religious parties and tribal and feudal structures dismiss the electoral rights of women. According to **WSANZ**, "In Swabi, Mardan and Dir districts, women were not just prevented from filling their nomination paper but from even casting votes. In Malakand division, religious leaders gathered to declare that the Nikkah, Namaaz-I-Tanaza and all other religious rites of women candidate and voters would be boycotted. So, thinking of women empowerment in political sector is like building castle in air.

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The third claim for women empowerment was in education and vocational training institutions.

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Despite their enrolment in schools, colleges and universities, it is not the true picture of reality. As stated by **LFS (Labour Force Survey)**, "over **31%** of the educated youth is unemployed while women constitute **51%** of the total unemployed population in Pakistan. This is because of the lack of skilled trainers and lack of teachers training in vocational institution."

The lack basic necessities for the hands-on practice of the candidate. As it is a fact that employers prefer to hire people who already have the required skills rather than train an unskilled person. Due to a lack of linkages between the formal TVET and industrial needs the employers feel that TVET does not provide them with workers with necessary skills in demand. There is no ^{such} coordinated action that has taken place so far to design any courses in partnership with the industry

to meet its needs. Hence, women empowerment is a far cry even in educational and vocational institutions.

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The forth claim for women empowerment was the government's implication by imposing law but the reality is that it fails to enforce laws. A table of crimes inlisted in **2022** in "Human rights commission of Pakistan" report based on police reports in as follows

Crimes Reported	N:o of cases
Rapes	3901
Gang Rapes	325
Honour crimes	316
Acid attacks	61
Domestic violence	1022

This data is of one year and only contained the reported crimes. This is no doubt that thousands of such cases are left unreported.

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The progress of cases is considerably slow and hearings of cases lasts several years and some-times the investigation remains incomplete due to work loads and less working force. Due to this incomplete investigation, cases remain unsolved and will not get their desired result. Additionally, corruption and bribery is also a main factor behind the incomplete investigation. This delay only affect the victim of domestic violence, the mother who wants financial maintenance for her or for her children, the woman who wants to get out of abusive relationship to start a new life, the acid attack survivors, the woman bears rape and so on. This delay has no affect on the criminal. Hence, the implication of laws without checks is also a myth in case of women empowerment.

The fifth claim made for women's empowerment was the government's implications by making shelter homes and NGOs. Though, these shelter homes are striving to provide institutional care to their residents still it lacks a proper check and balance. There is deficiency of general necessities including medical assistance and vocational training. An article of **DAWN** stated that, "despite a grant of RS20 million sanctioned last year by the city (Karachi) government, there are no recreational or vocational training facilities, barely any medical facilities and the women living there claim that **it is no less than a prison.**"

All this is due to lack of inspection and regulation. A proper observation of staff's behaviour is also absent.

A number of cases can be seen where women are made victims of physical and psychological violence by the appointed staff. Hence, it is assumed that women empowerment

is a myth.

Finally comes the unsolved problems that are the main hurdles for the empowerment of women. First comes in the list is honor killing. According to "Human Rights Commission of Pakistan Report," **384** cases of honor killing and **1952** reported cases of sexual violence took place in 2022. The acquittal of Qandeel Baloch's brother triggered a debate on problems in the law pertaining to honour killing and the need to make such crimes a non-pardonable offense. Second comes women trafficking. As stated in U.S website, "The government referred 22,597 trafficking victims including 16,958 women only." This is a huge number but in many cases victims do not trust the law enforcement and refuse to cooperate. Last but not the least is the tribal tradition of Vanis/Swaras, a custom where girls, often minors, are given in marriage or servitude to an

aggrieved family as compensation to end disputes, often murder. Though laws in 2005 and 2011 have declared it an illegal practice, the custom still continues to be practiced. It is because the writ of government is weak in rural areas, and local police often turn a blind eye. Unless these problems are addressed properly, talking about the empowerment of women is absurd. +202

The counter-arguments presented throughout the essay strongly support that women empowerment is a myth in Pakistan. To sum up, I want to quote the statement of **Kristalina Georgia**, Managing Director, **IMF**, "Women's economic and financial empowerment is critical for economic growth, which currently remains well below its pre-pandemic average. We need more women in the workforce." Pakistan requires a multi-faceted approach. It involves addressing barriers to education, economic empowerment, workforce participation, violence against

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women, and societal attitudes. Let us remember that the power to make a difference lies within each of us. By investing in women's empowerment, Pakistan can harness the potential of half of its population and contribute to its overall progress and development. It is essential for the government, civil society, and the private sector to work together to create a conducive environment for women's empowerment in Pakistan. This solution offers a practical and effective approach to address the issue, providing a path towards positive outcomes.

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THE END

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