

Can women be equal to men in Pakistan.

Outline:

1. Introduction

Thesis Statement.

2. Development which shows that women can be equal to men in Pakistan.

- a) Women role in economic has been enhanced
- b) Electoral participation has been increasing
- c) Women are largely present in politics
- d) Women are successfully working in government sectors
- e) Societal setup about women as breadwinner is also changing.

f. Women are highlighting in educational domain

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g. In military forces women are also actively working.

3. Women are facing certain hurdles in achieving equality with men.

a) Patriarchal dominance is hindering women equality in Pakistan.

b) Sexual harassment is present in different fields.

c) Educational disparities are also hindering women equality specially in rural areas.

d) Some extremists also use religion as a tool against women equality.

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4. Ways to overcome hurdles and steps to make them equal to men,

a) There should be proper implementation of Gender National policy framework

b) The opportunity of UNICEF National gender strategy should be properly avail

c) Women rights in Islam should be highlighted by Islamic scholars instead of hard image

d) Awareness campaigns should be launched to change patriarchal setup

5. Conclusion,

There is an ongoing debate on this issue, that can women be equal to men in Pakistan. But here are certain developments which shows that women can be equal to men -

As women role in economic has been increased and their electoral participation has also been increasing - Now women are largely participating in politics, in government sectors and in most of the fields. Even now the societal setup about women as housewife is also changing with respect to time - Although women are highlighting

in every field still there are certain hurdles for women in Pakistan due to patriarchal setup of society. In spite of development still somehow sexual harassment is present in different fields that ~~are~~ is hampering women equality and success. Some extremists also use religion as a tool against women. But instead of ~~of~~ some of these hurdles there are still some ways are present to integrate women in society and to make them equal to men. Thus, there is no denying the fact that women can be equal to men.

Pakistan in socio-political-economic spheres - But the road to this equality has certain formidable challenges - However, these challenges can be addressed through strong and bold measures.

There are certain developments which shows that women can be equal to men in Pakistan - Firstly, it can be seen that women role in economics has been increased in Pakistan from the last few years. Now, women are also consider as breadwinner in society as compared to ancient times when women role was just of housewife.

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Forexample : Efforts are ongoing to reduce gender gap in the labor market likewise According to World Bank collection the female labor force participation in Pakistan was reported 23.18% in 2023 which was double than the previous years. In addition to this Benazir Income Support Program has also financially supported millions of women Moreover National Gender Data Portal has also been established to track progress on women's economic empowerment and to gain information about policies. Thus, these examples shows that women role

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in economics has been increased from previous years which shows that women have the potential to be equal to men in Pakistan.

Along with economic participation, women role in electoral participation has also been increasing.

Because the role of women in electoral participation in Pakistan has seen a notable increase in recent years. Likewise:

Election Commission of Pakistan and other stakeholders worked to reduce the overall

gender gap on voter rolls from 12.4m in 2018 to 9.9m in 2023.

Election Act 2017 is also one of the best achievement

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to become women equal to men. Because according to this act: Election is considered null and void if women voter turnout is less than 10%.

And it was the first time that Pakistan registered more women voters compared to men in 2024 elections.

Almost 2.3 million more women turned out to vote in 2024 compared to 2018.

Thus, these statistics of Election Commission of Pakistan demonstrate a positive trend towards increased female electoral participation, reflecting a broader movement towards becoming women equal to men.

Thirdly, women are largely present in politics.

likewise :

↑ Even in present era the Chief Minister of Pakistan's largest province (Punjab) is a woman. Not only in present time, ^{also} by observing history it is clearly seen that Pakistan's first female Prime minister took over the command of country in 1998, which was a remarkable achievement in the whole muslim world. After this women parliamentary caucus was made in 2008 in Musharraf's era. Women quota is also present in provincial and local government. Thus, all these examples shows that women are largely present in politics and they

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can be equal to men
in Pakistan.

Fourthly, along with
politics, women are also
successfully working in
governmental sectors of
Pakistan. For example there
is 10% quota for
women in public sector
employment, province level
quotas are even higher
such as 15% in Punjab.
And in CSS, PMS and
all other competitive
examinations for Government
recruitments, women are
equally welcome to
participate along with men.
In Gilgit Baltistan
and Balochistan women
has also been achieving
success in government
sectors and in bureaucracy.

In previous day in May 2024, 6 women were promoted to DC in these provinces, although these provinces are less developed as compared to other provinces of Pakistan. But, these example underscore the ongoing efforts of government and highlight the positive trend of women's increasing involvement in government sectors.

Fifthly, the societal setup regarding women as breadwinners in Pakistan is also changing day by day, and it reflects a positive shift towards becoming women equal to men. For-example. A specific report on this topic is titled "Homemakers or bread

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winner: labour force participation of Pakistani women, published in the journal *Community Work & Family*.

The report discusses that support from fathers and husband, as well as personal strategies adopted by women to overcome gender-based discrimination that facilitate women's participation in the labor market and this participation changed the perspectives of society about women as breadwinner. These studies prove that societal setup regarding women as breadwinner is changing day by day.

Sixthly, women are also highlighting in educational

domains, Women in Pakistan have been making remarkable progress in the educational domain and international organizations are also praising Pakistan's efforts to become women equal to men in education. For example:

The Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education (PAGE) was recognized as a laureate of the 2023 UNESCO Prize for Girls and women's education. PAGE's star Schools program has impacted over 540,000 girls including minorities and refugees, helping them overcome challenges to go to school. In addition to this The

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National Report on the
Status of Women in
Pakistan 2023 emphasized
the government's commitment
to promoting an environ-
ment where women can
realize their full

potential. Thus, these
examples highlight the
ongoing efforts and
successes of Pakistani
girls in overcoming
barriers and achieving
excellence in education.

Along with all the
above development, there
is another remarkable
development that is
active participation of
Pakistani women in
military forces in the
past few years. This
development can help

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Pakistani women in becoming equal to men. International organization and agencies also praised this remarkable shift.

For example: The UN Women report "Women Peacekeeping: Barrier Assessment in the Recruitment and Retention of Pakistani Women Peacekeepers."

acknowledged Pakistan as having the sixth-highest number of women staff officers and military observers in UN peace-keeping missions. It praised the success stories of Pakistani women peacekeepers who have overcome barriers and served as peace-keepers. An article titled

"Empowering women in the Pakistan Army: A Catalyst for Gender Equality and National Progress" discussed the transformative shift in the Pakistan Army's approach to gender equality. It highlighted the army's initiatives to encourage women's active participation in various spheres of military service. These examples and reports demonstrate the positive role of Pakistani institutions in becoming women equal to men.

In spite of all these developments, critics say that there are some hurdles in achieving

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women equality in
Pakistan. Following are
the some hurdles that
hinders women equality
in Pakistan

Firstly in Pakistan
patriarchal dominance is
deeply entrenched societal
norm that hinders the
progress of women's equality.
This dominance manifests
in various forms such as
gender discrimination in
education, employment and
healthcare - And women
are also viewed as dependent
beings. For - example:
women, especially those in
rural areas are often
confined to their homes,
symbolized by the Chador
and Char-diwari.
Secondly, in Pakistan

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sexual harassment at the workplace is a grave issue that hinders women's equality. Here are some examples illustrating its impact.

① Career progression; women may avoid certain jobs due to fear of harassment.

② Economic independence: harassment can lead to absenteeism, productivity or even job loss, undermining women's economic independence and reinforcing their financial dependency on male family members.

Thus, sexual harassment on workplace hinders women development and this is one of the main hurdle in becoming women equal to men in Pakistan.

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Thirdly, educational disparities in rural areas and religious extremism against women are the significant barriers to women's equality in

Pakistan. Educational disparities in rural areas cause limited access of education to girls hence result in economic interdependencies of women to men family members.

And religious extremism against women also prevent women from pursuing education or careers, reinforcing the belief that women should not step outside the traditional roles.

But these challenges are not insurmountable, they

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require a concerted effort to address - Thus, by recognizing the interconnected nature of these issues here are the comprehensive recommendations that not only mitigate the immediate effects of these barriers but will also lay the groundwork for long-term empowerment and equality for women in Pakistan.

Firstly, there should be proper implementation of Gender National Policy Framework, because this a pivotal step in ensuring women equality. However, its success depends on proper implementation.

This requires a multi-tiered approach that

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includes legislative reforms, enforcement of laws that protect women rights.

The framework should be integrated across all levels of governance, with clear accountability.

Secondly UNICEF's National Gender Strategy (2024-2027) for Pakistan presents a comprehensive plan for becoming women equal to men. To fully leverage this opportunity, it is crucial to implement the strategy across both urban and rural areas. The strategy focus on addressing structural barriers and promoting socio-ecological models for change must be supported by Robust

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partnerships between government bodies, civil society and international organization. This collaborative effort can drive transformative change and significantly improve the lives of girls and women in Pakistan.

Thirdly, Islam grants significant rights to women, and these should be emphasized by scholars to promote gender equality and for becoming women equal to men. Influential figures like Dr. Riffat Hassan and Asma Barlas have made strides in reinterpreting Quranic texts from a non-patriarchal perspective laying a foundation for Islamic feminism in

the country. Thus by focusing on women's rights in Islam and by promoting religious texts that support women's equality, women equality in Pakistan can be achieved.

Fourthly, to dismantle the patriarchal setup in Pakistani society awareness campaigns could play a crucial role. For - examples; initiatives like "Aurat March", if taken positively and seriously about women's right like education, health, employment then it could transform patriarchal setup of society.

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examples that there is
no denying fact that
women can be equal
to men in Pakistan in
the socio-economic
and political domains.
But the road to
this equality has certain
challenges. However, these
challenges can be
addressed through strong
and bold measures.
Some of these measures
are already mentioned
above.

So,

Equality for women
in Pakistan is **not** just
a dream, it is a
right that, with
perseverance and unity
can transform into
reality.