

"Gender Equality : Myth or Reality"

Outline

1. Introduction

Thesis Statement :

In contemporary, Gender equality is often deemed to be a myth. However, In reality, gender equality is a real cause owing to ample factors playing exemplary role in abolishing gender apartheid.

2. Gender Equality : a modern day notion.

3. How gender equality is a myth ?

a. Majority countries' leaders are male

b. Women : an unpaid labor in domestic fabric

4. How gender equality is a reality ?

- a. Women-centric legislation protecting women socially
- b. Elevation of women to noble and key positions of country
- c. Indispensable role of women in health sector empowers their professional thoughts.
- d. Special reservation for women representator upholding their rights
- e. Pro-women drafting of charters of political parties
- f. Exemplory role of women in politics ensuring smooth functioning and sustainable growth
- g. Men assuming the gender-assigned role of women depicts equality
- h. No gender discrimination followed by Islamic conjunctions.

5. What are Impediments in achieving gender equality?

a. Obstinate socially constructed roles are major hinderance in attaining gender equality

b. Marginalisation of women in professional realms.

c. Work-place harassment inculcates inferiority complex in women

6. What are progressive paths to ensure gender equality?

a. Real Education and Introduction to liberalisation of thoughts

b. Stringent legislation distorting the notion of misogyny.

7. Conclusion

- 54 mins

One is not born but rather becomes a woman. This quote by John Stuart Mill in his book, 'Subjection of Women', underscores how cultural orientation moulds gender roles. In the same manner, the prevalent societal norms and values foster women rather than subjugating them. Furthermore, Judith Butler writes that gender is doing rather than a being. Thus, it can be inferred from parallel tendencies and acts of men and women that gender equality has become a real cause. The notion of gender equality has its roots back in 18th and 19th century; however, it is also contended to be a distant dream as women had been barred from attaining thrones. But in reality, the hallucinations have borne fruits and women have attained assertive roles of commanding, accounting, penalising and negotiating. It is true depiction of abolition of gender apartheid. Gender apartheid resides in culture-centric orientations which yields gender stereotypes and kept women marginalized to

a larger extent. In the current status quo, will strict legislation and liberalisation of thoughts further enhance the matter in question? In contemporary, gender equality is often deemed to be a myth; However, in reality, gender equality is a real cause owing to ample factors playing an important role in abolishing gender apartheid.

Gender equality is a modern day concept. However, its roots can be traced back to 18th and 19th century. The book written by Mary Wollstonecraft: A vindication of the rights of women. It was written in 1792 and was a key milestone laying the foundational ideas for gender equality. Moreover, Seneca Falls convention in United States was the first organized effort for women rights and equality. Later in 20th century, suffragette movements were in play, demanding the right of women to vote.

The soaring rate of men leaders is the testament to prevalent gender disparity. The cultural construct of gender roles and confining women to domestic chores has been alarming. In the same manner, in Afghanistan under the Taliban rule, women were denied to ample political and social roles. Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, women are marginalized from leading political roles. According to United Nations, only 27 countries out of 193 are headed by a women leader. After having a keen eye to such statistics, the gender inequality appears to be a real cause.

A part from it, in domestic sphere, women are assigned the duty of household. Due to her femininity gauged by the gender constructed roles, they are marginalized and suppression of their rights prevails. As in Pakistan,

women have been confined to kitchen and men to bear all economic expenses, it clearly depicts gender disparities. According to a study, a average women spends daily 3 hours in house labor. Therefore, it is pellucid how women are exploited by confining them to house chores.

In contrast, women-centric legislation is protecting women socially, ensuring gender equality and its growth. Gender apartheid is orchestrated by societal norms and culture. However, women rights can only be ensured by state through legislation. Ironically, women despite many laws are not socially protected. Yet still to some extent women are socially protected by enacted laws. In 2006, Musharraf enacted Protection of women act, 2006, which conferred many rights to women which were subjugated by Hudood ordinances. Thus, it is

beyond doubt, legislation can put an end to prevailing gender disparity.

The status of gender equality can be gauged by whether women are conferred noble and key position in a country. Through many centuries, the thrones and leading role were vested in men and women remain elusive to it. However, by the advent of renowned feminist in 18th and 19th centuries, the constrained rights of women were emancipated. In 1988, Benazir Bhutto became the first women Prime Minister of Pakistan. It was sheerly a beacon of hope for Pakistani women to have women leader after dictatorial eras.

Women indispensable role is the testament to fact of gender equality. It is the prevalent notion, more likely,

in Pakistan, that female's professional career means medicine. Further, there are no biologically - capacity - Indifferences between men and women thus women perform efficiently in the health sector. It is evident from the study of World Health Organisation that around 67% of women are serving in global health. Thus, the exemplary role of women bears the testament the gender equality is a real cause.

Special reservation for women in parliament underscores the significance of gender equality in Pakistan. The right to represent is the inherent right of women which is either constrained or cease to exist in many countries. However, in Pakistan, by the virtue of promulgation of legal framework order, 2002, women were conferred a fixed 17% of the reservation

the parliament. The same was followed in senate and the provincial assemblies.

In a nutshell, special reservation for women protect their right and ensures the abolition of gender apartheid.

Women-centric drafting ensures gender equality.

Women are often marginalised from politics due to delicate nature and prone to political endeavours. For

the same concern, the democratic party have strengthened the role by drafting the charter of party and conferring ample of rights to women. The

'Women for women' Initiative was also an example how pro-woman drafting of Charters of political parties ensures the representation of women and striking down the prevalent myths of gender inequality.

Exemplary role of women in making countries prosper fosters gender equality. It can be inferred from the era of Prime Minister Jacinda Arden of New Zealand, how and to what extent, the country prospered economically and socially. Furthermore, the era of Benazir from 1988 to 1990 and 1993 to 1996, these era are called to be golden times for the democracy of Pakistan. In those eras, Women were fostered in every sphere of life. Moreover, the economic conditions of Pakistan appeared to be on inclining rate. Summing up all, Women leadership has at times borne fruits.

Women assuming the role of men or men assuming their role of women, it is true depiction of gender equality. As gender assigned roles are

manifested by the cultural norms and its societal orientation. Thus, the gender role, beyond doubt, will differ from society to society. Having a keen eye on Pakistan, the role of a cook is vested to be of females. However, at the same time ample examples are at the surface that men are cooks in restaurant and performing their jobs judiciously. Hence, it can be inferred that gender equality has been ensured by striking down the stereotypes.

The abolishing of gender apartheid is further evident from the Islamic conjunctions which moulds the normative sphere of society. As per Islam, women are not barred from working and having professional pursuits. No matter economic responsibility is placed on men, it can

be additional right to women and its freedom. Moreover, the notion of polygyny only exist if the equality remain intact. Thus, from these it can be contented that in no matter Islam has produced gender inequality rather it has fostered the same.

Having defined the facts exhibiting how gender equality is a real cause, we shall proceed to shed some light on what are possible hindrances and impediments in achieving gender equality.

One of the major hindrances in abolishing gender disparity is obstinate socially constructed roles. Gender is a pure manifestation of society and culture. In the same way, society defines what are perimeters for masculinity and femininity. As in the society of Pakistan,

boys are perceived to be having masculine body and wear clothes assigned to males only. Similarly, boys' toys differ from the toys of girls. According to feminists of third wave, these cultural constructs play a vital role in obstructing the dream of gender equality.

Moreover, the marginalisation of women in political sphere also contributes towards mounting gender gap. In many western, eastern and South Asian countries, women were confined to households. However, after World War one and two and after enactment of equal pay act, 1963, the gender parity has curtailed. But yet still women cease to have equal opportunities as men. It is further evident from the fact that Pakistan ranks 145 out of 146 countries as per

World Economic Forum. Therefore, it can be contended that despite many legislations, equality cannot be achieved due to prevalent marginalisation of women.

Furthermore, workplace harassment is the substantive and operating cause of gender apartheid. Due to this menace exercised in many workplaces, ample of women have indicated fears of in-house jobs. According to study and Dawn, it is contended that 44% of women in workplaces are exposed to the menace of harassment. Furthermore, it can also be inferred from the fact that ample of women are preferring online jobs in the contemporary. Thus, it can be contended that 'workplace harassment strikes down the concept of achieving gender equality.'

Having elucidated the possible obstructions in achieving gender equality, we shall ponder on progressive paths which will promise gender equality.

Introduction to liberalisation of thought through real education may contribute towards making gender equality a real cause. For the same, the discipline of gender studies must be regularised in colleges and Universities. Beyond doubt in Pakistan Universities like Sindh University, Fatima Jinnah University and Peshawar University are offering this program; However, there has to be liberalisation thought to put an end to these gender roles contructived by culture and society. Moreover, it can be presumed that such acts will play a optimistic role in curbing the menance of gender inequality.

Furthermore, the enactment of laws protecting women will strengthen the notion of gender equality. Laws akin to protection of women act, 2006 and protection against harassment of women at the workplace act, 2010, will contribute towards making a difference. Furthermore, there are a lot more options to further enhance the protection of women from social evils such as creating separate courts for crime against women. It will ensure speedy trials and make the notion of gender equality more rigid and inflexible.

In conclusion, it is plausible to believe that gender equality has become a tangible reality not a idealistic pursuit. It has been achieved due to changing mindsets, and social movements across the globe. From legal reforms - laws protecting women

to commendable leadership roles, there has been advancements that are undeniable. Furthermore, there are still some obstinate hurdles thwarting gender equality in a true sense. Apart from it, as pillars of progress continue to rise, the vision of a world where one's gender no longer defines their roles is not a distant hope but a shaping truth. The onus now rests on sustaining this momentum, for in gender equality lies the foundation of a just, balanced and prosperous future for all.

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