

_ _ _ : 01

"Gender equality is myth or reality"

OUTLINE:

1. Introduction

2. Thesis Statement

"It is clearly evident that gender equality is myth and ~~we are~~ ~~living~~ women are socially marginalized and they suffer in almost every aspect of life, from her birth till death, their rights are being exploited"

3. How gender equality is considered as myth?

3a) Misinterpretation of constitution of Pakistan which provides equal rights for women.

• Constitution of 1973, Article 25A: Equality of citizens.

3b) The ineffectiveness of Pakistan's laws and legislations in protecting women rights.

• Women Protecting Act

— 1 — 1 — 50

3c) The women in Pakistan faces enormous hurdles in accessing education.

- Economic Survey \Rightarrow Male literacy rate: 73.4%
- Female literacy rate: 51.9%

3d) Disparities for women in maternal healthcare and reproductive services

- "Maternal mortality remains a major public health concern in Pakistan"

-Dr. M. Afzal, DG Health, Ministry (Dawn)

3e) Pakistani women find many difficulties in accessing employment.

- Pakistan Human Capital Review 2023 (World Bank)
- \Rightarrow Labor (female) participation rate: 23%

3f) Patriarchal mindset limiting women opportunities and choices.

GGI Index 2024 \Rightarrow Pakistan ranks 145th out of 146th countries.

3g) Lack of Political empowerment of women in Pakistan.

• only 20% of legislation seats in Pakistan are held by women

3h) Women are socially marginalized
• Case study of Makhtam Mai

3i) Pakistani women face gender based discrimination.

• Jahanzeb Khan - UN Women Country Representative (The E. Tribune)

3j) Feudalism is the huge hurdle in the way of women empowerment

• "Feudalism and women rights in Pakistan" (Aural Foundation, 2019)

3k) Women in rural areas are leading pathetic life

• Comparison with developed countries

3l) Anti-~~social~~^{women} social and cultural norms prevalent in Pakistani society.

• "Pakistan Human Rights Commission-2020"

4. Conclusion

In our society, the women still stands at a vulnerable and weak position and faces number of psychological and economical problems even in the 21st century. The concept of gender equality is misconsidered in country like Pakistan. In other words, gender equality is myth. Moreover, people behave like stranger towards women, at every stage of her life and in every rock and corner of the society. She is not free to develop her career or to do a job. Gender equality is considered as myth because, there is misinterpretation of constitution which provides equal rights to the women of Pakistan. Pakistan is legged behind in protecting women rights that shows her ineffectiveness of laws and legislation. In addition, women in Pakistan faces enormous hurdles in accessing education.

women face disparities in maternal healthcare and reproductive services.

Moreover, Pakistani women find many difficulties in accessing employment and its a society with full of patriarchal mindset, limiting women opportunities and choices. Thus, it is clearly evident that gender equality is myth and women are socially marginalized and they suffer in almost every aspect of life, from her birth till death, their rights are being exploited.

To begin with, the misinterpretation of constitution of Pakistan which provides equal rights for women is the leading factor in gender inequality. The constitution of Pakistan is a written draft that provides equal rights to everyone. The misinterpretation of constitution results in socio-economic disparities and inequalities. These disparities and inequalities

_ _ _ 30

are ~~not~~ foundations of exploitation of women rights. This can be proved through the constitution of 1973, Article 25A: which provides "equality of citizens".

Therefore, gender inequality is the result of misinterpretation of constitution.

In addition, the ineffectiveness of Pakistan's laws and legislations in protecting women rights is another factor responsible for gender inequality.

The Pakistan's law and legislation ensures the protection of women rights. However, its ineffectiveness leads to the exploitation of women rights.

The ineffective law and legislation is responsible for the dismal condition of women in Pakistan. This can be understood through the "women protecting Act", which guarantees the protection of women rights. Therefore, the gender inequality is because of the ineffective laws and legislations of Pakistan.

_ _ _ 30

Moreover, the women in Pakistan face enormous hurdles in accessing education which exacerbates the gender inequality. The distance routes and far flung schools are reason for the gender literacy rate. The hurdles in accessing education results in low literacy rate.

Because of low literacy rate and lack in education, women remain vulnerable which indicates gender inequalities. According to economic survey, "male literacy rate is 73.4% whereas, women/female literacy rate is 51.9%". Hence, difficulties in accessing education leads gender inequality in Pakistan.

Furthermore, Disparities for women in maternal healthcare and reproductive services fuel gender inequality in Pakistan. Maternal healthcare and reproductive services must be provided to all women.

_ _ _ : 6

Unfortunately, in Pakistan, limited access to skilled birth attendants and emergency care leads to higher maternal mortality rates.

This can be proved through the argument advanced by Dr. Muhammad Afzal, DG Health, Ministry, in his interview in Dawn, said "maternal mortality remains a major public health concern in Pakistan". As a result, gender inequality is because of disparities in maternal healthcare and reproductive services.

Pakistan's women finds many difficulties in accessing employment which leads in gender inequality. Employment is the need of time and necessary for survival. But, women in Pakistan faces enormous difficulties in finding employment because of their gender and physical appearance. According to World Bank in "Pakistan Humans

capital review - 2023, "labour female participation rate in Pakistan is 23%." Consequently, lack of employment for women leads gender inequality"

Similarly, patriarchal mindset limiting women opportunities and choices in Pakistan results in gender inequality. The society, which is guided and ruled by men and houses, in Pakistan are headed by male. In countries like Pakistan, where women are socially marginalized because their private and public life is headed by a man. According to Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) 2024 "Pakistan ranks 145th out of 146th countries". Therefore, patriarchal mindset is responsible for gender inequality in Pakistan.

In the same way, lack of political empowerment in Pakistan aggravates gender inequality. One of

_ _ _ 05

the primary reasons for this disparity is the limited representation of women in the countries legislative bodies.

For instance, women hold merely 20% of legislative seats in Pakistan. Therefore, political women in Pakistan are exploited results in gender inequality.

Women are socially marginalized is another factor responsible for gender inequality in Pakistan.

Pakistani society is a male dominated society. Social, economic public and private life of woman in Pakistan is controlled by men. It is a fact that women are socially marginalized by men. This can be proved through the case study of "Makhtaram Mai", whose life was ruined because of the unethical laws imposed by elders. Hence, gender inequality is a result of

— 1 — 1 — 30

marginalized women.

Furthermore, women in Pakistan face gender based discrimination that escalates gender inequality.

One of the primary reason for this discrimination is the limited access to education and economic opportunities. This restriction is deeply rooted in societal attitudes and cultural norms. For example, Pakistan has one of the lowest literacy rates in South Asia with only 57% of women aged 15 and above being literate. Hence, Pakistan women face entrenched gender based discrimination results in gender inequality.

Additionally, feudalism is the huge hurdle in the way of women empowerment that leads gender inequality in Pakistan.

The concept of feudalism is not new in Pakistan. Feudalism is

_ _ _ | _ _ | : 65

the mother of all ills. Feudal lords limits women in almost all aspect of life. Aurat March in 2019 highly mentioned the reason for gender inequality as "Feudalism and women rights in Pakistan". Therefore, feudalism is another factor responsible for gender inequality.

Also, women in rural areas of Pakistan are leading pathetic life under frustrations and tensions that foster gender inequalities. This disparity is particularly evident in their limited access to basic rights and opportunities. The cultural norms restrict their economic and social mobility. For example, women in developed countries are more prosperous ~~where~~^{even} they are living in rural areas than Pakistani women. Thus, rural Pakistani women's lives are severely impacted by gender inequalities.

Finally, anti-women social and cultural norms prevalent in Pakistani society significantly impacts women's lives, results in gender based discrimination. These norms restrict women's autonomy, limiting their opportunities. This restriction is deeply ingrained in the country's patriarchal culture. For instance, honor killings and acid attacks perpetuate violence against women with 474 reported cases in 2020 only. Moreover, these norms also leads to child marriages. In conclusion, Pakistani women face entrenched social and cultural barriers results in gender inequality.

In a nutshell, it is an undeniable fact that gender equality is a mythical phenomenon. In a country like Pakistan, where women rights are exploited and they suffer in almost every arena of life. However, this can be justified

by many ways, such as, lack of political empowerment of women in Pakistan, women are socially marginalized. Pakistani women's face gender based discrimination, feudalism is also a huge problem in the way of women empowerment, women in rural areas of Pakistan are leading pathetic life, anti-women social and cultural norms prevalent in Pakistani society, misinterpretation of constitution and ineffective laws and legislations in protecting women rights are the main factors responsible for gender inequality. Moreover, gender equality can be prevailed by taking serious steps, which are, implementation of strict laws and accountability in it, investing in various sectors for empowering women, providing equal opportunities in education, health and legislation, awareness through media

and by iradicating anti-women social and cultural norms. However, by taking such steps Pakistan can prevail gender equality.