

Frailty, Thy Name is Woman

1. Introduction

The perception that woman is frail has been shaped by society by various discourse, particularly, by discouraging her roles. Although, the physical strength of a woman is not like man, but spiritually, mentally, and psychologically she is equally strengthened. However, there are some steps that can help a woman to progress and strengthen in all the fields.

2. Contextualizing Frailty as a socially associated term with woman

3. Reasons that why a woman is frail

(a) - Gender based discrimination against woman starts from her birth, hindered her potential to grow as a strong independent woman

- (b) - Not making her a part for decision making processes, makes her a weak gender.
- (c) - Increased sexual and physical violence against her resist her to be strong
- (d) - Her right to get education usually detains to secure resources for her male siblings
- (e) - Her work as a mother or wife stands nowhere financially
- (f) - Gender discrimination at workplace also depicts her faulty e.g. not giving her equal wage as her male counterpart
- (g) - ^{Not giving} her right to not to own her reproductive health
- (h) - Man plays unjustified religious card by not fulfilling his duties but demanding his right

4- Measures that are required to strengthen feminine gender

- (a)- Enhancing woman's ability to take decisions
- (b)- Make woman able to protect herself from any kind of abuse
- (c)- Respecting her choices and acknowledging her role as a homemaker or working woman
- (d)- Enhancing her potential by giving her education
- (e)- Presenting strong woman as a role model e.g Hazrat Khadija R.A as Entrepreneur, Hazrat Ayesha as a knowledgeable person, Nusaybah R.A as Warrior and Ruffaida R.A as nurse
- (f)- Giving her right to take care of her reproductive health can make a difference

5. Steps to be taken at the state level to mainstreaming women

- (a) - Strict implementation of laws against harassment of woman
- (b) - Allowances to be given to the parents of female children who cannot afford their education
- (c) - By enhancing the political representation of women, their issues can be better addressed

6. Conclusion

A vehicle cannot function properly when something went wrong with either of its wheels. Similarly, a society becomes a dysfunctional one, when either of the man or woman is marginalized or frailed. In a patriarchal society,

the female gender is less empowered and considered frail. This has been prevailing for centuries by not giving a woman her due right.

The gender disparity she faces at all levels and in all the fields, helped tremendously to make her frail. Sexual, physical, economic and psychological violence against her, negatively influence her potential to be empowered. In a male dominant society, she is not allowed to take decisions about her reproductive health nor about her career choices. Moreover, whatever she does never pay her off. The perception that woman is frail is shaped by society by various discourse, particularly, by discouraging her roles.

Although the physical strength of a woman is not like man, but spiritually, mentally and psychologically she is equally strengthened. However, there are some steps that can help a woman to progress and strengthen in all the fields.

In a social perspective, the term frailty is associated with the feminine gender because woman is considered as a symbol of beauty and delicacy. In a poetic view, flower is analogous to woman, which is easily accessible and too delicate to break. Moreover, because of less empowerment, it is easier to deprive her from her rights, which is actually a manifestation of frailty. Women too are not

aware of their due rights and not demanding them from an empowered gender show their frailty. Thus in so many ways, frailty of woman is evident in a society.

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Firstly, gender based discrimination against a woman starts from her birth that makes her frail later in life. Gender discrimination hindered her potential to grow as a strong independent woman in society.

When she is born, in backward societies, her parents do not become happy as they become on the birth of their male child. For instance, they share sweets on the birth of male child, whereas black chana on the female child birth, that

depict their sorrow. Moreover, her nutritional value has not been fulfilled if the parents are poor. According to a **UNICEF report**, the **Stunted growth rate in female children is 39.4%** in Pakistan. Such a high number clearly shows the future of these female children is in jeopardy. Thus, at this stage in her life she moves towards a frailty.

Secondly, not making her a part for decision making process also contributes to be known as a weak gender. From her primary group i.e. family, she is not given the due importance to share her views and opinions in any matter. As a growing

child, it is make her realized that she is not able to take her even small decisions. This makes her unable to realize her full potential and to become self-sufficient. In future, her problem-solving skills do not help her to cope with the problem on her own and makes her dependent on other. And she is called as frail gender.

Thirdly, increased sexual and physical violence against her become a tool to make her weak. Such gruesome violence resists her to become a strong and self-sufficient woman. If she is not saved ~~in~~ at her workplace and anywhere outside ~~at~~ her homes if not impossible

then, surely difficult to go outside and participate in the economy. Harassment at buses, shopping malls and even in residential surroundings add fuel to the fire.

In Pakistan, **Zainab rape and murder case** is a

prime example. Not only this, but a physical violence case against a minor

girl namely **Rizwana**

also a key example of such violence against

women. **Noor Mukhdoom**

is also a victim of heinous abuse. Such incidents

are increasing day by day in our society. Hence, all

these circumstances make it obvious for woman

gender to not to be useful and being called as frail.

Furthermore, she is not given her right to get education as it is detained to secure resources for her male sibling. The general perception of parents in the third world countries is that female education is not as important than that of male. Because of the socio-cultural norms, that woman only have to take ^{care} of the house chores, which required almost no education. On the contrary, man has to work out from home and to deal with others. Moreover, educating man can help him to get good employment. Whereas, in the case of woman it is believed that what change can she bring by educating or getting

employment. The gender gap in literacy rate in Pakistan can be easily observed by looking at the **Economic Survey of Pakistan²⁰²³**, which briefs the overall literacy rate is **62.8 percent** out which **73% of males** and **51.9% females** are literate.

Thus, the lower female literacy rate acts as a contributor to weak feminine gender.

In addition to this, a woman's primary role is be a homemaker. But unfortunately, the most priceless job as a mother and wife has no moral or financial gain to her. Her duty as a mother or wife makes ^{her} role precious,

When she works all the day, in fact, 24/7 but do not get anything in return. Moreover, the tragedy is that, in our society homemakers are discouraged and the working women are glorified in front of which further lower down their morale. From a sociological perspective, raising a child that can be a useful addition to society is one of the most crucial jobs. However, in our society it is considered an extremely under-rated role.

Moreover, gender disparity at workplace also a key contributing factor to make this gender frail. Female employees usually face

discrimination in the form of less wage as compared to their male counterpart. Nevertheless, she is doing her job at the very best level but still given less wage than a male. Such discrimination against women is not depriving them from their rights but also shows the male supremacy in a society. The statistics given by **International Labour Organization** in **2019** in terms of global wage report, shows the **gender pay gap** in Pakistan is **34 percent**. Such a big difference between the pay of both the gender, highlights the gender discrimination at workplace. Hence, it is also indicating the social per-

ception of female gender as weak.

Not only this, women in our society are not given their right to take care of their reproductive health.

Marrying at early age is also common in the lower income *étasse* households.

When a woman marry at an early age, her child bearing age automatically extends. In this case, ~~the~~ by giving birth to children without taking the due birth space, her health deteriorates and cause many other health issues.

Moreover, in a patriarchal society like Pakistan, the masculine gender considers it as their moral duty to take decisions about the woman gender regarding

her reproduction. that add salt to the injury. Woman in Pakistan cannot make decisions about contraception. According to **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** every 50 minutes a woman dies due to the **pregnancy complications** in Pakistan. Thus, it stresses the frailty of women. gender.

By keeping in view the social issues or causes that ~~causes~~ contribute to the less empowerment and lack of inclusivity, here require some socially recommended measures.

First and foremost, there is a dire need to make women able to take their decisions from

early age. This can help her to become self-sufficient and independent.

Moreover, by making women able to protect themselves from any kind of abuse or violence, can contribute to realize her full potential. In this way, parents can help their daughter ~~by~~ by making them learn such skills like karate and others. At societal level, parenting tips and tricks must be learnt by both the parents to raise a child in the manner that she can become a useful and productive citizen.

Secondly, respecting woman's choices and acknowledging her role either as a housewife

or working woman. Socio-cultural norms must be modified by encouraging her that whatever she chooses for her.

For a housewife, her role must be glorified in-front of her, to save her from any sense of inferiority. and vice-versa for a working woman.

Thirdly, by providing her due right to get education, a woman can break a stereotype of being frail. It is to be acknowledged by the society that raising a generation is not something insignificant. An educated mother can best done her role of raising a child. It is a very famous proverb,

Said by Napoleon:

"Give me a good mother & I will give you a good nation."

Moreover, it can bring this gender to the mainstream and reduces their dependency on others.

Additionally, presenting strong women as a role model to them can be a best solution to this issue. For instance, by looking at the life of Hazrat **Khadija R.A.**, an entrepreneur woman can learn how they can go hand in hand with their role as a homemaker and as a working woman.

Also Hazrat **Ayesha R.A.**, who was such a knowledgeable person that she

narrated **2,210** hadiths.

Her life is a beacon of light for the women out there. Moreover, Hazrat **Nusaybah bint-e-Ka'ab** was warrior, whose prominent role in the battle of Uhud becomes a prime example of empowered woman. Not only this, Hazrat **Ruffaida R.A** acted as a nurse in the battle of Trench, shows the strength of a woman. Such examples must be inculcating in the minds of young girls to become like them.

In addition to this, reproductive rights must be given to women so that they can make decisions about her health. Islam gives this right to women by the mutual consent of

both parents, the duration of breastfeeding can be reduced as mentioned in the Qur'an, **Surah-Al-baqarah** - This is the right of woman automatically paves a way for towards better health.

Moreover, if a woman completes her two years of breastfeeding, it automatically give her the right to have a birth space of two years. Hence, by giving her due right to take decisions about reproductive health, woman can enjoy a good health.

Some steps are also required at the state level to bring woman to the mainstream.

First of all, strict implementations of laws against harassment of

woman is required. There is an urgent need to suppress the factors that contribute to woman violence or harassment. A safe environment at workplace, residential surroundings and public places can increase women's participation in country's economy. Pakistan ranks **145 out of 146** countries in the global gender gap index 2024, that shows the extent of discrimination and harassment. In Pakistan, a law is already enacted, namely, **Protection against harassment at the workplace act 2022**. Such laws are to be executed at every level to reduce harassment. Thus, it can become a tool for women empowerment.

Secondly, allowances

to be given to the parents of female children, who cannot afford their education can increase literacy rate among women. For instance, in **Bangladesh**, government had announced the stipend of **200 rupees** to every female child's parent by enrolling her into school. The scheme turned a magic and the literacy rate of female rises from 25 percent to 74 percent today. For low income households, these kinds of schemes can work and help woman to get higher education.

Moreover, by enhancing the political participation or representation of women, their issues can be better addressed. Women participation in the parliament and judiciary can be increased

by fixing quota for them.

Also women parliamentarians can better represent their issues or the general public issues in front of the law makers. And the women in the judiciary can be helpful to interpret the laws regarding women. Women in the executives also play a significant role to execute laws. Hence, their increased participation can address women problems at social level.

In a nut shell, the concept that women are frail has been shaped in centuries. Their mental and physical nourishment are equally important. Their role in the society must be admired and signifies as the other gender. Making them realize that whatever they do

has an impact on society.

Hence, a holistic approach is required to bring the marginalised gender to the mainstream.

"A woman with a voice is, by definition, a strong woman."

~Melinda Gates
