

# Gender equality a Myth.

## Outlines :

### 1. Introduction :

- 1.1. Hook
- 1.2. General statement
- 1.3. Thesis statement

### 2. Main Body :

- 2.1 - Characteristic features of new feminist waves
- 2.2 - Analysis of our culture : it interferes with constitutionally mandated women rights.
- 2.3 - Our culture interferes with feminist activism in Pakistan:
  - 2.3.1. feminism is considered a cultural taboo (to be and Western propaganda.
  - 2.3.2. Traditional conservative values of our culture.
  - 2.3.3. Religious and patriarchal culture impediments.
  - 2.3.4. Colonial Existence of colonial cultural syncretism, tribal customs and value systems.
- 2.4 - Feminist activism has also introduced changes in our cultural landscape:
  - 2.4.1. Women have gained civil rights
  - 2.4.2. Awareness about women rights has increased
  - 2.4.3. Women have gained various socio-economic rights.
  - 2.4.4. Helped in passing women friendly legislations.
- 2.5 - Recommendations to reform the cultural landscape and improve feminist activism in Pakistan:
  - 2.5.1. Improving education and socio-political awareness campaigns.
  - 2.5.2. Increased representation in socio-political institutions of women.
  - 2.5.3. Genderization of the existing institutional mechanism
  - 2.5.4. Increasing legal and social protections of women
- 2.6. Conclusion.

No country can ever truly flourish if it stifles the potential of its women and deprive itself of the contribution of half its citizens. [Michelle Obama]

All the claims of gender equality and women's emancipation are nothing more than hollow slogans and a myth. The women are still the victim of patriarchal system and a myth perpetuated by capitalism, even the developed nations have yet to ensure gender equality not to speak of third world countries, which are marred by poverty and illiteracy. The plight of women in the western world is also not satisfactory as the issues of low wages, work place harassment and cases of rape are increasing. Despite global efforts and progress towards gender equality, significant disparities persist, with women worldwide facing economic disadvantages, limited political participation, unequal access to education and healthcare. Achieving true gender equality requires concrete actions like promoting education, eradicating poverty among women, and enforcing strong legal protections.

The dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has renewed the intensity of the efforts to ensure gender equality. However, the world has achieved progress toward gender equality and women empowerment under the Millennium Development goals; Women and girls continue to bear the brunt of adverse economic and political impacts and aggravate existing gender disparities worldwide. Around 2.4 billion working-age women are not afforded equal opportunities, and 178 countries maintain legal barriers that prevent their full socioeconomic and political participation, according to the World Bank Report 2022. A cursory glance at the international arena reveals that women are disadvantaged, suppressed, and subjugated owing to the engendered health and education system, under-representation in legislation, and uneven employment opportunities. Sad to relate, Pakistan is not a way down the ladder. Despite some efforts to empower women, the pronounced gender-based violence in society, low participation in the electoral process, and inappropriate distribution of inheritance show that gender equality, by and large, remains an elusive dream in Pakistan. It is aptly evident by the report of the World Economic Forum that ranks Pakistan 153 out of 156 countries on the gender parity index 2021.

Females make more than 50 percent of the population of Pakistan. However, by not providing them the opportunities and facilities to participate in all sectors of life, we have failed to cash in on the talents and skills of a major chunk of our population and it has resulted in huge economic losses. However, it is important to note that the problem of gender inequality has plagued not only Pakistan but almost every part of the world. Males, Females, eunuchs; all genders are facing inequality all around the world. This burning issue must be resolved as early as possible in the light of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR).

A School of thought believes there is discrimination on the basis of gender in the world, so no need to talk about gender inequality because no one's rights are being violated. These people, to solidify their point, provide some examples like Article 25 (2) of the constitution of Pakistan, 1973, which guarantees that "There shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex." and thus safeguards women's rights. They also put up the examples of women leaders like Fatima Jinnah, Benazir Bhutto, Dr Fehmida Mirza, as women's active participation in politics.

According to the exact definition of equality, it is an amalgam of three different words, 'Status', 'Opportunities', and 'Rights'. We are living in a world where along with her ascribed status of a woman, sister, mother and wife, she also has also achieved so many other statuses. Some women have achieved a status of pilot, some have become doctors, others have earned their reputation as teachers and many are successful athletes. If we talk about the new word 'Opportunities', then without a doubt with the massive success the world is providing women with new and new opportunities.

With the advent of industrial revolution, the mode of production shifted from fields to industries where modern technological methods are used to maximize production. With this revolution came the chance for women to work in industries because they were cheap labor for the capitalists who desperately reduced their cost. Hence, capitalism had its own economic motive to encourage women emancipation. Two great world wars were a dramatic factor in bringing women out of their four walls, as these wars killed millions of men and there was a shortage of labor. Consequently, the women came out of their homes and began to work in factories. Nevertheless, these radical changes united women for their rights and they launched feminist movements for their rights. They fought for the control over their bodies and choices affecting their sexual and reproductive lives. According to the PEW research report, women are paid twenty-five percent less than men for the same amount of work.

We can say that although the women made some progress towards their emancipation, gender equality is still a dream. Even in the present world women constitute small part of professions, especially in the third world countries. There are hardly a few women in the position of power and do not constitute substantial part of political parties. The problem with gender equality is the mode of production and the role of women in it. Social and religious super structure imposed by elite is another major hurdle in the way of gender equality. Fixing quotas and legislation to protect women are superficial and temporary solutions to the problem. The real change will come when women will have opportunity to play an important role in the mode of production. Moreover, the women have to challenge the prevalent religious and social discourse, which perpetuates patriarchy and subjugates women. Language is also an instrument of gender discrimination as it constructs reality and inculcates social and religious values. Hence, gender equality will remain a myth unless and until women challenge the core structure, which causes their subordination.