

Is there an end to the plight of women in Pakistan?

Outline:

I. INTRODUCTION:

II. There is no end to the plight of women in Pakistan:

- 1) Increased number of honour killings (Bano Bibi in Balochistan)
- 2) Child marriages taking away the girls' precious childhood (story of Tabassum Adnan)
- 3) Increased cases of domestic violence (Report by NCHR)
- 4) Minority girls facing forced religious conversions (Barchundi Sharif Seminary in Ghotki)
- 5) Education as a luxury for women (Insecure mindset of men in rural and tribal setup)
- 6) Compromised free movement (BBC documentary)

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- 7) Women in Pakistan facing workplace harassment (National Women's Law Center Report)
- 8) Digital violence and harassment against women (findings by Prism Dawn media group)
- 9) less access to jobs as compared to men. (only 5% women in federal work force by Express Tribune)
- 10) Persisting wage disparity (Gender Pay gap report 2024)
- 11) Women being denied their due inheritance (Woman inheritance paradox in Pakistan: Faith vs. Family by Munazza Ahmed)
- 12) Living a healthy life as a luxury (PDHS Survey)
- 13) Underrepresentation of women in leadership roles (30/268 in Sindh Assembly; 0 in KP's Cabinet)
- 14) Ineffective legal protection (Annet Foundation Report 2022)
- 15) Facing backlash after demonstrating for due rights (HRCP report)

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CONCLUSION:

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There is no end to the plight of women in Pakistan. The state of women rights in Pakistan is miserable and at its lowest.

The latest Global Gender Gap Index is a deadly manifestation of this where Pakistan stood last. Number of honour killings is increasing day by day. Child marriages are common. Women are facing domestic violence. Moreover, minority girls are forced to convert their religion.

Getting education is a luxury for women in Pakistan. Their daily life mobility is compromised.

Workplace harassment directed at women is common. They are harassed digitally. Economically, they have less access to jobs, lesser wages, and are denied their due inheritance. Politically, they are ~~are~~ unable to participate effectively due to patriarchal mindset of male dominated society. Also, they face

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backlash when they stand up and raise voice for their fundamental rights. Therefore, women in Pakistan are persecuted ~~on~~ all fronts.

To start with, women are killed in the name of honour in Pakistan. This compromises their very right to life. Whenever a ^{woman} ~~she~~ decides to go against the norms set by male dominated society, she is met with harsh punishments. Death is the prime amongst them. The most common cause of honour killing is marriage by choice. While men can marry whoever they want to, women are forced to marry a person ^{whom} ~~she~~ has never seen in her life. For example, Bano Bibi was shot by her immediate family members just because she married by her choice. This clearly shows how women are killed when they decide to marry a person of their choice.

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Second, child marriages are common in Pakistan. This practice takes away the precious childhood of a girl. A girl's marriage is fixed-the moment she is born-with an already grown man. This is because girls are considered a burden and parents in tribal and rural areas prefer to get rid of that burden as soon as possible. Tabassum Adnan, founder of first female jirga in KP, told her story in a documentary. She said that she was not aware of her marriage and that she was happy for the attention she was given in her marriage. However, things turned quickly when she left with her husband and her childhood was gone. Thus, women's childhood is compromised due to child marriages.

Third, domestic violence against women is common in Pakistan. They are subjected to violence

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in all forms including mental and physical ones. Women are expected to make home cleaner, cook for the family, rearing of children, and just above all - being a tool for her husband to lower his frustration. National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) reported that over 80 percent ^{cases} of gender-based violence in Pakistan fall into the category of domestic violence. Hence, domestic violence is prevalent in Pakistan.

To add on, girls who belong to minority have limited right to practice their religion because they are forced to marry outside their religion and convert.

This practice is common in the rural areas of Sindh province - especially in Katcha area and Tharparkar. Whenever a girl is born there in a non-muslim

family, the parents grow wary of the girl's safety lest she should be abducted by clerics of that area. Darsah Bharchundi Sheriff is one the examples where non-Muslims girls are kept and forced to marry a Muslim boy. Illiteracy and misinterpretation of religion are some of the reasons behind this practice. This is a clear manifestation of compromised rights of girls belonging to minority.

Additionally, getting educated is difficult for women in Pakistan.

It is a luxury especially for those girls who reside in backward areas. There are number of reasons behind it. First, the patriarchal society prefers to keep the women in a state of dependance, for education empowers them and makes them independent. Second, they are considered a liability and

not worth the investment. And third, if they manage to go to school they face harassment. All of these factors result into an alarming number of female literacy rate that is a mere 52.8% as per 2023 population consensus. Hence, women are deprived of ^{basic} ~~their~~ education in Pakistan.

Similarly, free movement is also a luxury for them. While education deprivation is compromised and restricted to some areas, their mobility is a luxury everywhere. Women are kept in a state of dependence. They are unable to run their daily life errands. This is because they are not allowed to go outside their homes without the male members' permission. And even if they manage to go they are harassed at every place including bus

stands and markets. A BBC documentary showed that there were no women to be seen in the dense markets of Peshawar. Therefore, their mobility is restricted.

Moreover, women in Pakistan face workplace harassment. When they decide to break the chains and be independent by making their own living, they are faced with such phenomenon. This harassment includes physical, verbal, sexual, and emotional one. Also, abuse of authority is prime among them. A National Women's law center report stated that over 85 percent women have been harassed in their respective workplaces. This is a clear reflection of how women are harassed at their workplaces. Furthermore, harassment is not restricted to work place

and homes. It is also prevalent at digital platforms. Women can not even use social media platforms freely. They are faced with every kind of harassment including verbal abuse and online blackmailing. Prism Dawn media group carried out a survey in which at least 40 percent respondents confirmed that they have been harassed online in one way or the other. This harassment ~~is~~ done by users of patriarchal mindset - results in compromising women's mental health. Therefore, women are harassed digitally.

Economically, women face discrimination when it comes to the access to jobs. Women are offered less or inferior jobs

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as compared to men in Pakistan. Employers consider men to be better part of a work force. They consider them more efficient and underestimate the abilities of women. At public ^{sector} levels, women are offered less jobs and less quality. Express Tribune recently reported that only 5 percent of the federal work force consists of women. This alarming number is a proof that women have less access to jobs.

Also, when some women manage to get a job, they are offered less wages as compared to men. This phenomenon is called wage disparity.

This systematic persecution results in making the ends meet ^{unable} ~~difficult~~ for women in Pakistan.

Moreover, less economic independence means less empowerment and more dependance, thus the disparity.

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As per Global Gender Pay Gap Report 2024, women in Pakistan earns 34 percent less than men. Hence, earning equal wages is a distant dream for women in Pakistan.

When it comes to the question of inheritance, women are deprived of their due share.

Male members of a family - already drawing more share as per law - deprive their female members of their already minimal share. This practice also ^{strips} ~~deprive~~ women of their economic independence and basic right to inherit. In an article published by Munazza Ahmed named 'Women & Inheritance Paradox in Pakistan: Faith vs. Family'. She discussed how men portrays themselves to be the champions of religion but when it comes to giving the women their fair share, they turn

a blind eye. Therefore, women are denied their due share in inheritance.

Moreover, living a healthy life is a luxury for women in Pakistan. They are expected to seave only. Women doing exercise is considered a taboo in Pakistani society. No matter how bad is her health condition, she is expected to ~~to~~ act normally.

As per a PDHS survey, over 85 percent women said that they have not done any physical activity for fitness in their whole life. Also, religious clerics protesting in Bonn against family parks is one of the many examples of social barriers to women's health. Thus, women can not live a healthy life in Pakistan.

Politically, women are underrepresented in Pakistan.

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While women like Benazir Bhutto have proved that they can perform optimally at highest positions, their participation remain a luxury. Men are dominating in all sectors and they are resisting women to be a part of decision making. In Smith Assembly, there are only 30 out of 268 women MPs, while in the newly announced cabinet of KPK, there are no women at all. This shows the level of discrimination that women face when it comes to acquiring leadership roles.

legally, women are not protected in Pakistan. A strong legal system is a prime tool to protect women rights.

However, not in the case of Pakistan. It is due to this weak system that women are persecuted on all fronts. Whether

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it be domestic violence or harassment in public, all forms of discrimination occur because men do not fear the consequences. As per an 'Aurat Foundation Report', only 0.5% GBV suspects were convicted. The remaining 99.5% offenders faced no charges. This alarming number shows that weak legal system is aiding to the plight of women in Pakistan.

After all the harassment and discrimination, one exercises her right to raise voice, but not in Pakistan. Women face backlash whenever they raise voice for their due rights. At online platforms, they are mocked and made fun of. While demonstrating^{in Public}, they are not facilitated by the state. As per a Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) report ~~Aurat~~ March faced backlash from 2001-2025 successively.

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This shows the level of hardships that women are facing. Therefore, women in Pakistan are not only persecuted but also silenced.

In Conclusion, there is no end to the plight of women in Pakistan. From honour killings and domestic violence to child marriages and force conversions, they are persecuted on all fronts. However, these issues can be addressed and alleviated by raising awareness, strict implementation of women protection laws, and global human rights intervention. Ultimately, women will be free to exercise their due rights, and Pakistan will move closer to a just and inclusive society where gender no longer determines one's worth and opportunities.