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Gender Studies

Mock # 2

QNo:1

Media plays a decisive role in shaping gender identities and norms. Critically analyze the representation of women in Pakistani media & its implications for gender socialization & power relations.

1. Introduction:

"I don't raise my voice to shout, I raise my voice for women who does not speak for themselves-Malala Yousaf"

In the contemporary era, media act as a decisive factor in shaping gender identities and norms. Media act as a great tool for raising awareness regarding gender and gender based violence. Media is a platform of social construction, growth, development and awareness for gender in our societies. In developing countries like Pakistan, media shape narratives

and actions. In a country such as Pakistan, where gender inequality and gender-based violence is quite imminent, media can act as a revolutionary tool to bring changes. In Pakistani societies, women are suppressed by religious and cultural norms hindering the development of state and women. In these moments of crisis, media can play a decisive factor for the awareness and development of women. A society where patriarchy is a common practice, women's awareness and effective use of media can break the chains of gender inequality. The core example of beneficial use of media to promote women development is work of Sharmila Obaid. She highlighted women's oppression and violence being practiced in Pakistan. Her national and international representation in media and filmmaking highlights the importance of role of media and its implications.

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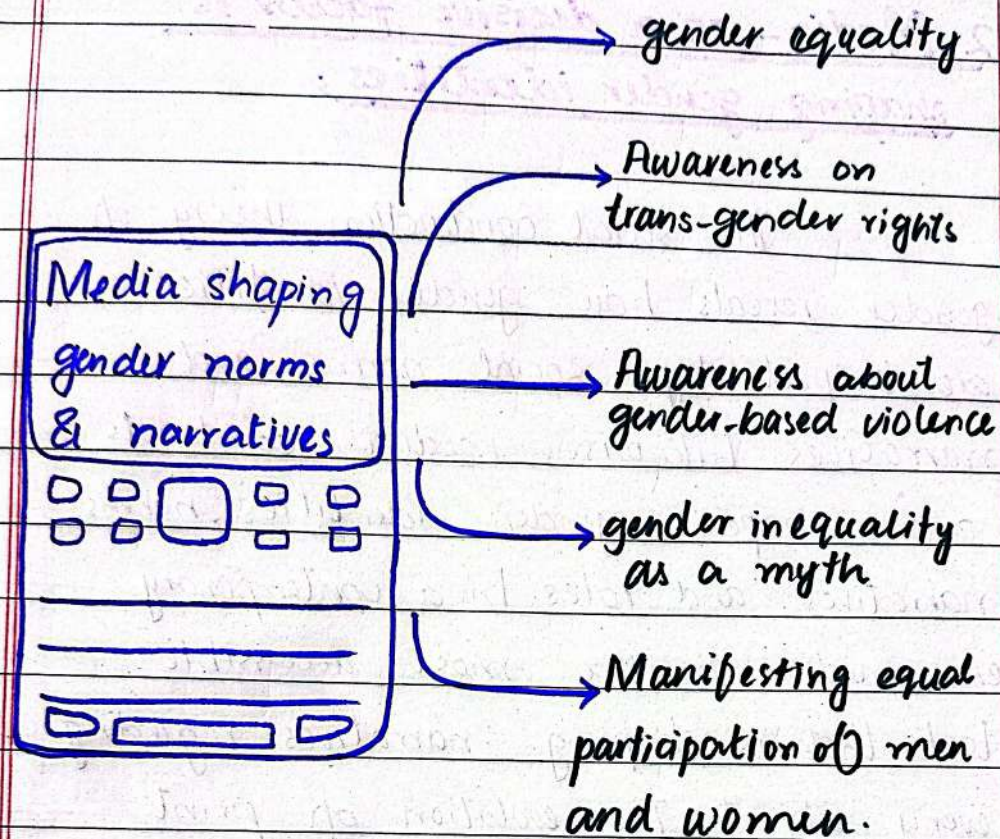
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2. Media - as a decisive factor is shaping gender identities;

The social construction theory of gender reveals how gender identities are shaped by social norms and narratives. Likewise, media constructs and shapes gender identities, norms, narratives and roles. In a contemporary era, media is the most accessible tool that is shaping narratives regarding every subject. The evolution of print media to electronic media and electronic media to social media brought revolutionary changes in contemporary era. The women representation in media e.g. in film-making, news channels, social media voices highlights the importance of gender equality and manifests how women representations in male-dominated fields can bring out revolutionary changes. Let's dive deep to under the impact of media in shaping gender norms:

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Media shapes gender narratives by abolishing the myths and false narratives of gender inequality. Now a days, social media is educating society regarding equal participation of women. As per the ideas of feminists of 21st century who believe that patriarchy is the belief set by men to suppress the potential of women. Media strengthen narratives and convert those narratives into beliefs shaping gender identities.

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3- Representation of women in Pakistani media;

Gender development and equal women representation in Pakistan is oscillating between cultural norms and societal development. The oppression and suppression of women in Pakistani society is quite imminent. But after all the persistent glass ceilings in Pakistani society, legends like Sharmeen Obaid has managed to make a significant change and presence felt by society. Her tireless efforts in film-making representing gender-based violence, gender inequality, patriarchy and women oppression made her recognisable and distinct at national and international levels. Her works like A saving face that was based on acid attacks on women in Pakistan won oscar award and a girl in the river - the price of forgiveness highlighted the true picture of patriarchy and violence on women in Pakistan.

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4. Women in Pakistani media highlights gender inequality and GIBV in Pakistan

The presence of women in Pakistani media provided a new sphere of influence to media in Pakistan. Rather to depict typical love stories, Sharmin Obaid Chinooy made a difference in society by shifting Pakistani film-making industry to awareness. Her remarkable efforts in highlighting sensitive issues like acid attack, honour killings, patriarchy, gender-based violence based on true events in Pakistan are quite commendable. Her efforts were recognized and appreciated at international levels.

The acid attack documentary A saving face by Sharmin Obaid resulted in the development of "acid attack act for women". As per this act, criminal would be given a sentence of lifetime imprisonment. This highlights how media alone, can bring significant changes in society.

5. Implications of women representation in media;

a. Awareness of the society; women representation in media promotes awareness regarding education and financial independence of women, promoting gender equality and women empowerment.

b. Breaking chains of patriarchy, narcissism and misogyny;

Women in media stand against the shallow and biased ideas of patriarchy and misogyny that only empowers men. Women in media promote gender equality, abolishing the religious and cultural practices of patriarchy.

c. Unlocking women's potential by providing equal opportunities;

Social media promotes gender equality by providing equal platforms and liberty of decision making without any hesitation creating equal opportunities for men, women and transgender.

6. Conclusion:

In a nutshell, media proved to be a great tool in promoting gender equality. Media has influenced and educated the women living in oppression to stand for their rights. The role of women in Pakistani media has brought out significant changes in Pakistani society, e.g. acid attack act. The rise and growing influence of social media paved the way for women's development. By the advent of media, women are now powerful enough to raise their voices against violence, making a significant difference. The growing influence and significance of media is abolishing the practices of patriarchy and violence in society.

QNo: 2

Examine the role of state, legislation and institutions in promoting gender equality in Pakistan. Examine the effectiveness of recent laws.

1. Introduction:

"It is a risk to say something in Pakistan. It is a risk to say for women, it is a risk to say for a non-muslim in Pakistan but I can't stay like a vegetable in society - Asma Jahangir." The given quote by an eminent feminist Asma Jahangir depicts the very true picture of Pakistan. Indeed Pakistan is a hard country to live in where power and authority consolidates only in the hands of male. The society, culture and religious norms are set up by patriarchy to empower their influence in society whereas women in Pakistan are still struggling with basic rights of education, freedom and economic independence. It is the duty of state to maintain

and promote gender equality. The fragility of state and institutions resulted in gender inequality in Pakistan. The unstable economy of state shows that women empowerment and gender equality is no more their concern. The poor and weak enforcement of fragile laws shows the shallowness of state institutions. The laws that were once made to empower women are decaying in the thick books of legislation. To empower women, state needs effective implementation and strong institutions rather than being overwhelmed with more laws.

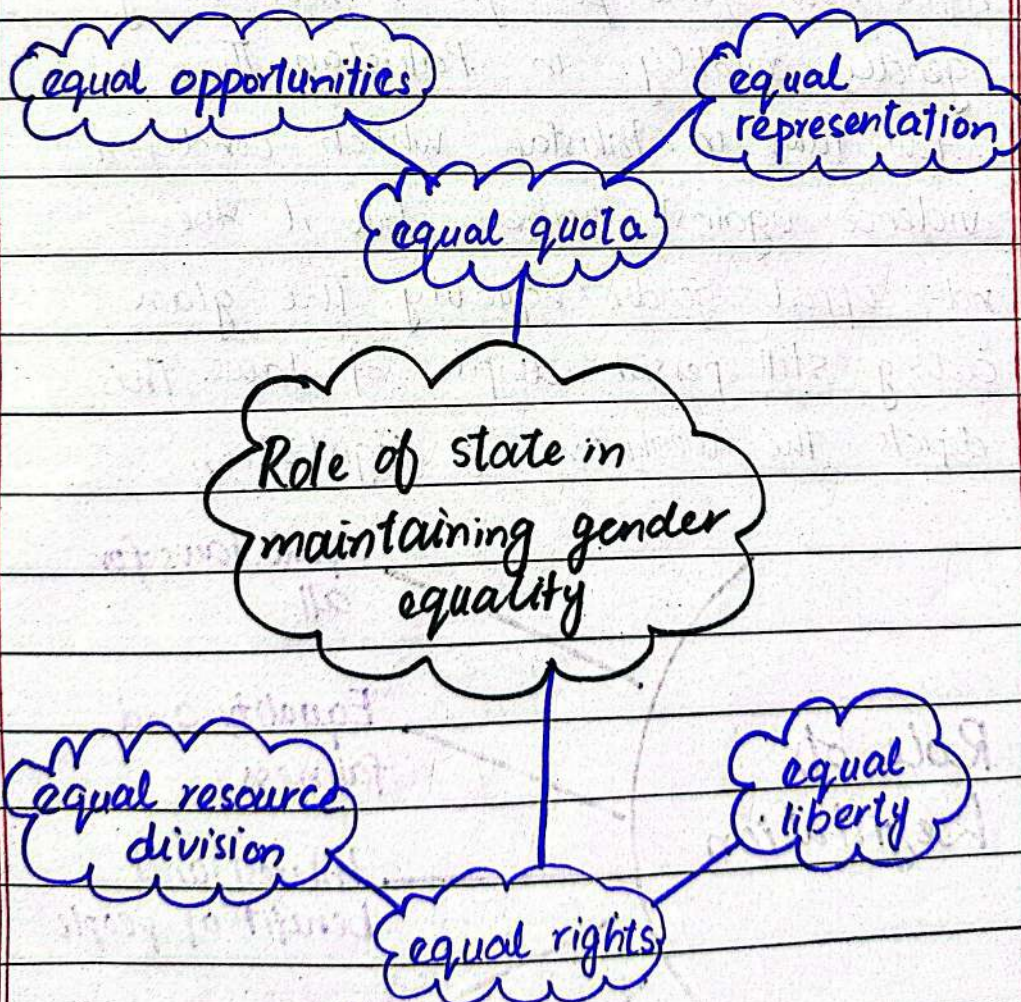
2. Role of state in promoting gender equality

State is the refuge and home to its people. It is the utmost duty of state to promote equality and fulfill the demands of its people. A strong state benefits its people by maintaining equality in all domains. Unfortunately, Pakistan badly fails to fulfill the responsibilities of state.

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As per global gender index report 2025, Pakistan stands at 148 out of 148 countries in promoting gender equality. That should must be a moment of realisation for Pakistan. Even in the 21st century, Pakistan is lagging in gender equality. The state and government badly failed in maintaining gender equality, through persistent gaps.



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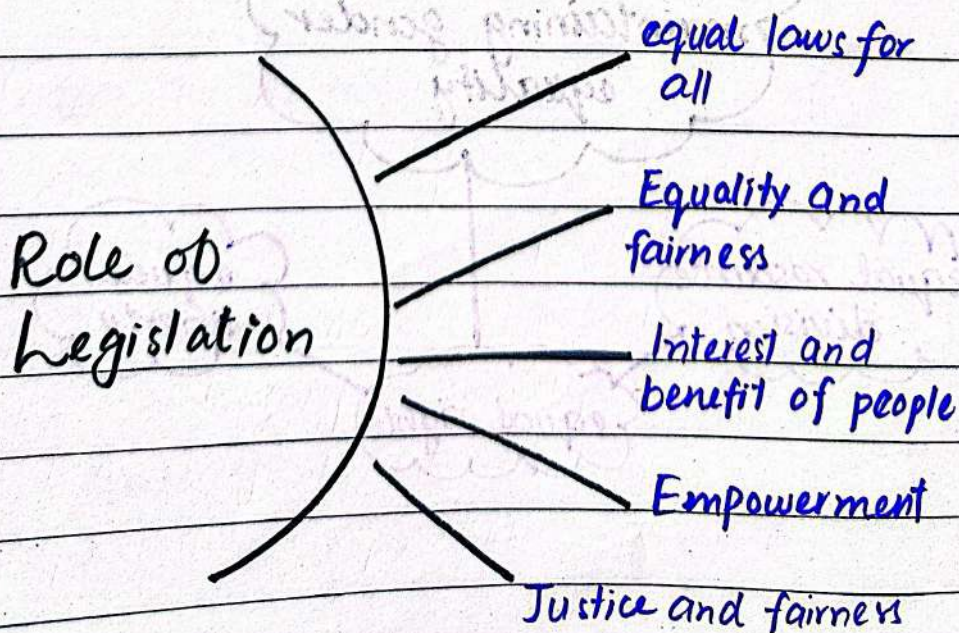
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3. Role of legislation in promoting gender equality in Pakistan;

The law making body, legislation of any state is responsible for maintaining law and order in the state.

Weak laws means weak and poor justice system of state. The people of state cannot be strong unless its laws are strong.

The legislative body of Pakistan is right now quite paralysed in maintaining gender equality in Pakistan. There are few laws in Pakistan which condemn violence against women but it does not support gender equality. The glam ceiling still persist despite of laws. This depicts the weakness of legislation



4. Role of institutions in maintaining gender equality;

Strong institutions are the building blocs of any states.

Strong and effective institutions strengthen the state. In Scandinavian countries where institutions serve state and have highest gender equality rates, Pakistan is unfortunately still struggling with basic right of education. The importance of education was highlighted by Pakistani peace activist and feminist Malala Yousafzai as;

"Give me a pen and
a book and I can
change the world"

- Malala

Education, welfare, empowerment and financial independence are all promised by state institutions when they are committed to their responsibilities. Unlike Pakistan where institutions are more committed to corruption (annual corruption report by IMF) rather than being committed to their responsibilities.

5. Effectiveness of laws against violence and gender inequality in Pakistan;

Pakistan has adopted and developed multiple laws under the national action plan (NAP) and women empowerment programs - to promote gender equality. But the question is even after adopting multiple laws to promote gender equality why Pakistan still stands at last position in global gender index report 2025? The answer is not few number of laws but poor implementation of laws. The executive, judicial and legislative bodies of Pakistan are affected by political interferences, resulting in poor implementation of laws, making them ineffective. The problem with persistent gender inequality in Pakistan is over-whelming and weak number of laws that are decaying in thick books of legislation without any implementation.

For instance,

In case of rape, conviction rate and punishment stand at 0.2% in Pakistan and in case of honour killings conviction rates are 1.2% - Dawn news.

The problem does not lie within legislation and law-making but in executive of these laws. The judicial system of Pakistan that supports favouritism erodes the effectiveness of laws making them weak.

Pakistan does not progress in gender equality unless state institutions maintain balance of power and zero interferences. The laws must be implemented equally and fairly over any class or status difference.

6. Conclusion:

In a retrospect, the state, institutions and legislation of Pakistan are failing in maintaining gender equality but it is not an illusive dream to achieve. With fair and effective implementation, Pakistan can achieve gender equality.