

Gender Equality, Popular Slogan or Really Implemented in Pakistan

Thesis Statement: Despite presence of robust and meticulous constitutional and legal framework, gender equality remained a popular slogan in Pakistan due to absence of implementation of policies and accountability. Therefore, certain measures are required for ensuring gender equality.

Outline:

I- Introduction

II- Gender Equality Remains ^{merely} a Popular Slogan in Pakistan:

A- Rising Gender-based Violence and violation of Article 25 of Constitution

(Bakar Tamali, Sindh)

B- Increasing Women trafficking and breach of Article 9

(Women Trafficking to China)

Bust, Guardian Report, 2025)

C- Raising Early Childhood Marriages and contravention of Article 16 of Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
(Report of WHO)

D- Soaring illiteracy rate of Women and Non compliance with Goal 10 of SDGs

(Pakistan Economic Survey)

E- Undermining of property rights and violation of Article 23 and 24 of Pakistan

(Report of WB, 2023)

F- Limiting Women's Participation in Politics, undermining Article 25 of the Constitution.

(~~A~~ 66 seats of female in National Assembly)

G- Denying equal access to justice for women, noncompliance with Protection laws- Criminal Law Act 2004 and 2016

(Case Study: Noor Mukaddam)

H- Discriminating against Women in
Employment opportunities and
violation of Article 18 of constitution

(Report of WIB)

I- Marginalising transgenders,
undermining Transgender persons
act 2018

(0 seats in National Assembly)

J- Neglecting Women health and
reproductive rights and violation
of Article 38(d)

(Report of Health Ministry)

III - Path to Progress

A. Complementing SDGs with National
Policy

(Case Study: Rwanda)

B- Highlighting Female leaders as
Role Models for Empowerment

(Asfa Kareem)

C - Introducing Special Incentives for
Women's Economic Independence

(Case Study: Bangladesh)

IV - Conclusion

"Though women makeup
49.6% of the global population,
they account for only one-
third of the jobs and
one hundredth of the property."

This report of UN Women gender
report 2023 encapsulates the status
of women in the world. Undoubtedly,
gendered power dynamics remain
a most pressing social threat of
the ^{human} History. Recently, countries have
introduced gender-friendly reforms
including **Pink Budget in India**, and
Macro Financing Schemes in Bangladesh.
Moreover, Pakistan has also introduced
unwavering and ground-breaking policies
and laws to break the inter-
generational gender inequality. Unfortunately,
due to misogynist tendencies of
policy makers and institutions, this
looming threat of gender inequality
is still hanging over the ~~pop~~ Pakistan's
prosperity and progress like a
Damocles sword. Resultantly, the

mark of gender inequality can be observed ranging from gender based violence to women trafficking and early childhood marriages. This gender disparity pushed them into more marginalization by taking educational right, property rights and political rights. Furthermore, the masculine institutional bias is a testament that women is trapped under patriarchal stranglehold. Hence, the government of Pakistan need to take visionary and robust actions to safeguard the daughters of country.

~~most~~ Most importantly, escalation
in gender-based violence is most
prominent issue faced by the females
in Pakistan. Currently, a young
girl, Sana Yousaf, like Zainab,
Bakar Tamali and many others,
becomes victim of this perpetual
evil. On the flip side, Article

25 of The constitution of Pakistan ensure equality before law.

Unfortunately, these rules are just like ink on paper. Women were struggling before these rules and still suffering.

In the same fashion, gender-based violence includes various crimes on the basis of gender including rape, honour based killing and acid-attacks. The question here is why always a daughter, a sister, a wife? Legal disenfranchisement is a major hurdle in the way of rise of females. Resultantly, this kind of violence not only harms the physical health, but also causes major psychological disorders ranging from PTSD to depression and anxiety. It has been discussed by

Judith L. Herman in her book

Violence and Recovery that such incidents causes long term emotional and psychological disturbance. Therefore, despite presence of constitutional

framework, female faced gender-based violence ensuring that gender equality in Pakistan is merely a myth.

In addition to gender-based violence, women trafficking remains another rising issue. Like many other countries, Pakistan is under a cloud due to women trafficking. Most significantly, such activities take birth in areas where the condition of law enforcement agencies are fragile. Firstly, the females are independent and comparatively poor than male, leading to entrapped in scammers more immediately. Secondly, absence of legal deterrence fuel the rise of such evils. Recently, **The Tribune underscores Bride trafficking to China Bust**, highlighting that how scammer target females and absence of law enforcement agencies put the lives of hundreds of female in danger. Although Article 9 of the constitution claims

that state will safeguard the life and liberty of ~~their~~^{its} people, but ~~it~~^{gender} seems failed. Therefore, equality remains just like a popular slogan in Pakistan.

One of the most alarming indicator of gender inequality in Pakistan is mounting prevalence of early child-hood marriages, which undermines girls from getting education. Moreover, it results in immature pregnancies, health issues and immature child birth, leading to stunted growth. Furthermore, early childhood marriages not only impacts the health of mother or baby, but also burdened the State under ~~health~~ health related fundings. This practice contravenes the **Article 16 of CEDAW**, which obligates to eliminate gender discrimination in all member. Pakistan ^{despite} being a member state of CEDAW, falling behind in ensuring gender equality. **According to the World**

Health organization (WHO, 2023),

Pakistan ranks among the top countries with high ranks of child marriage, with nearly 18% of girls married before the age of 18 years.

These marriages often result in increased maternal mortality and perpetual intergenerational poverty. Hence, the persistent childhood marriages showcased that how gender equality remained just a rhetoric speech.

Like early childhood marriage, females despite of their willingness, are not allowed to go to school due to structural misogyny. Surprisingly, 9.2 million children are out of school in Pakistan and 59% of them are females. It undermines girls from getting education about themselves, laws and justice. Resultantly, they become economically dependent on their husbands, fathers or brothers, who control their lives.

According to The UNESCO Global Education Report 2022, among world ^{illiterate} adult, 63% of them are women, leading to \$15 to \$30 billion lost of productivity per year. If this is the condition of world, one can imagine the condition of ~~educated~~ ^{education} females in Pakistan. Pakistan, despite a signatory member of UN and following the SDGs target 2030, falls very behind. As the 10th SDGs demands equality, but the literacy rate of Pakistan especially of females once again proved that the idea of gender equality is more symbolic than substantive in Pakistan.

Furthermore, the persistent exclusion of women from property rights in Pakistan constitutes a grave form of structured gender inequality, directly violating **Article 23 and 24 of the constitution of Pakistan**, this article guarantee every citizen the right to acquire, hold

and dispose property. Despite these constitutional protections, social norms and patriarchal customs deny women legal share in land and assets. The 2023 report of World Bank underscores that less than 3% of women in Pakistan own land. This inability to access property not only marginalizes women economically, but also undermines their mobility power and long-term life security. As per The Resource Theory, women who hold property or other assets are less likely to become victims of gender violence, as they feel more dependent and hold the capacity to throw down the gauntlet against structured misogyny. However, in Pakistan females are deprived from their own property, showcased that for many Pakistani women the promise of gender equality is

undermined by discriminatory practices.

Moreover, limited political participation ^{of females} in Pakistan remains an obstacle to gender equality. This limitation directly undermines the **Article 23 and 24 of the constitution**, which states that there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex and there should be equality before the law. Unfortunately, the political and social culture dominated by male entrapped the women in golden knot. This undermines their influence, independence, and ability to shape legislation effectively. Despite being comprises of 49% of the population of Pakistan, according to the **economic survey of Pakistan 24-25**, there are only 66 reserved seats for women in National Assembly out of 336. Resultantly, half of the

population cultural silenced,
results in democratic deficit.
Hence, the women's participation
in politics proved that either
there is gender equality or gender
inequality in Pakistan.

Apart from limited political
participation, there is limited access
of justice for the women in
Pakistan. Undeniably, women's struggles
to access the justice, a **case
study of Noor Mukadam**, similarly
the victims of rape or acid
attacks undergoes through cultural
silencing, which prevents the survivors
of such crimes from seeking justice.
These struggles are highlighted by
the **Shameen Obaid**, in her
award winning documentary, **A Saving
face**, that how they go through
societal pressure. These issues, hurdles
and violences raise question on
laws made to protect the female
including **Criminal Law Act 2016**.

anti-Harassment act 2014 - Moreover,

The informal justice system-jirga system - completely exclude female leading to biased decisions like **Mukhtaran Mai**. Therefore, the gender equality is just like cock and bull story, as there is no real implementation of these policies.

Similarly, females face discrimination in employment opportunities, reflects deep-rooted gender gap in Pakistan's labor market. The marginalization is in direct violation of Article 18 of The constitution, which guarantees every citizen of The state to enter in any lawful profession or occupation. However, in practice women face multiple barriers including gender stereotypes, wage inequality and lack of work place safety and childcare facilities. According to The World Bank gender Data Report 2023, only 10-20%.

of females are employed, one of the lowest percentage in Asia. Furthermore, females are more likely to be the part of informal economy, resulting in escalating protection issues, security concerns and health issues. In this way, females being part of informal economy lacks the opportunity of promotion. Therefore, despite the constitutional commitment to ensure equality, females face discrimination in every aspect of their lives.

One of the most concerning issue is marginalization of transgenderes. Eventually, the world is creating a safe environment for every gender, but in Pakistan transgenderes are highly marginalized. Despite ~~has~~ being present in significant numbers, there is still no seat for them in National Assembly. Moreover, according to

the transgender person right, they are supposed to live like other citizens of the state. Unfortunately, ~~as~~ they are mostly seen in the markets for beginning, there is absence of professional training platforms for transgenders. Moreover, this continuous marginalization might separate them from other society, leaving no room for them for progress. Therefore, the gender equality can only be observed in speeches, not in practicality.

Last but not the least, female face discrimination in reproductive rights. Most importantly, females need proper health for their reproductive system, but due to ^{excessive} poverty, most ~~women~~ of them are unable to have proper diet or healthcare system. Moreover, as Article 38(d) of the constitution obligates the state to provide basic necessities of life - including

food, clothing, housing and medical relief - to all citizens. Yet, in practice, reproductive healthcare for women remains severely underfunded. Ultimately, Pakistan faces alarming high rates of maternal mortality, absence of family planning services which affects adolescent girls and poor women. This state of affair donot only cause physical harm, but also denage their dignity. Thus, the failure of state to safeguard women from such problems widened the gap between the commitment of the state and the practicality of those commitments.

Women marginalization has been manifested in the various forms ranging from unequal education to job inequality and limitation of justice. Therefore, gender inequality, if left unaddressed, may meet the

beginning of downward spiral -
the thin end of the wedge -
manifesting in the form of
surging domestic violence, ^{soaring} gang
rapes and ~~marginalization~~ rising
rates ^{of death} of innocent girls - ~~therefore~~
Hence, it is high time to take
various steps including complying
SDGs with National policy,
highlighting female leaders as role
models for empowerment and
introducing special incentives for
women's economic independence.
Most importantly, Pakistan needs
to align its national gender
policies with Sustainable Development
Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 5.
This requires not only legislative
reforms, but also implementation
frameworks including transparency
and accountability. A compelling
example is **Rwanda**, which
has recently emerged a global
leader in gender equality by

embedding SDG into its national development agenda. As of 2023 report of WB, there is rise is 23% enrollment of girls in school in recent years. These steps have made Rwanda a global example for ~~all~~ whole world, especially Pakistan. ~~Back~~ Hence, such commitments not only fulfill international commitments, but also enhance social cohesion and national development.

Moreover, highlight the achievements of female leaders as national role models. Visibility of such personalities plays crucial role in motivating other females.

For instance Benazir Bhutto - first female PM; Arfa Karim - youngest software expert; and ~~Maryam~~ Maryam Mukhtiar - first female ~~airplane~~ fighter. These roles of females in various domains act as a catalyst for future daughters.

of Pakistan to work for the betterment of Pakistan. By integrating these personalities into curriculum and leadership training programs, Pakistan can foster a culture where female is studied and seen as an honour. Moreover, such initiative showcase an soft image of Pakistan in international forum, resulting in financial and institutional support.

Similarly, Promoting Independence for women is a corner stone of achieving genuine gender equality. To bridge the gap in employment, Pakistan must introduced targeted economic incentives that empower women as active contributors. This may include tax relief for female entrepreneurs, skill development subsidies and childcare support in workplaces. ~~Such~~ Eventually, such measures have proven successfully globally. **Bangladesh**, thousands of rural women

get employment and have boosted the economy of Bangladesh. Undeniably, Pakistan has also introduced programs like Ehsaas Program, Nashonuma in Punjab and TVET Centers, these programs need to reach marginalized women and end the cycle of poverty. These initiatives do not only equip women to become self-independent, but also contribute to household well-being and accelerate progress. Therefore, introducing incentive-based economic inclusion is vital to ensuring gender equality in practicality.

In a nutshell, Pakistan being an underdeveloped or developing country is taking visionary steps to end gender disparity including legal frameworks for gender protection, Ehsaas program,

and Danish school system. Although these steps are quite significant, yet a fly in the ointment in near implementation. Despite having reproductive rights and employment opportunities commitment, females are marginalized, due to lack of political will.

Moreover, the transwomen face intersectional biasness due to gendered social construct. It has become the culture of Pakistan and this gender discrimination is inherently transferred from one generation to the other.

According to social learning theory by Albert Bandura, a man tends to repeat what he/she observes in his/her surrounding. Therefore it is high time to think and take visionary steps to safeguard the daughters of nation.