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Gender equality in Pakistan's workforce: Progress and challenges

Outline

1- Introduction

Thesis statement: Pakistan marked numerous progress in gender equality in workforce; however, some challenges still persist that act as hurdles in its way to progress

2. A bird eye view of gender equality

3. Factors that determine Pakistan's progress in gender equality in workforce

3.1. Pakistan's different gender representation in politics
C.I.P - Participation of transgender in election in KPK

5%. Women representation in politics according to Election Act 2017

3.2. Enhancement of gender inclusivity in labour workforce

Pakistan women labour workforce increased from 18% to 24%.

3.3. Head role played by different gender in corporate sector

C.I.P - Women role as a director of FKS group

3.4. Youth skill program to different gender to make them eligible in work

Punjab initiated skill Program

for ~~transgender~~ in 2025

3.5. Enhancing gender inclusivity in government sector

C.I.P - Women or minority quota in government sector

4. Challenges face, by country in gender equality progress in workforce

4.1. Low income to minority gender

ILO report → Women in labour workforce receive less income as compared to men

4.2. Cultural challenges

Transgender or diverse gender face cultural challenge to participate in workforce

4.3

Harrasment challenge

Women face harrasment challenges in workforce

4.4

Religious ~~tempt~~ misinterpretation

According to UN-clerics in Pakistan act as a hurdle to minority gender participation by misinterpreting religion.

4.5

No law formulation to relieve women during maternal period

5

Conclusion

“Gender equality is the necessity of modern era to promote

global economic
growth."

(United Nation)

The above mentioned quotation emphasizes the importance of gender equality in modern era. Many countries in the world are at brink of

achieving gender equality as it boosts economic and social growth. Pakistan - a developing country - also attempts to achieve gender equality in numerous domains - specifically workforce. Some factors demonstrate progress

Pakistan achieved in workforce. These factors include women participation in

politics, enhancement of gender inclusivity in labour workforce and different genders role as corporate

head. Moreover, different youth skill programs to different genders to make them eligible in workforce, and special quota system for promoting inclusivity are the key facts that demonstrate Pakistan marked ~~some~~ progress in gender equality. However, there are also some challenges in achieving gender equality in workforce. These are low income to minority gender, cultural challenges, harassment and religious misinterpretation. Moreover, no law formulation to relieve women during maternal period also acts as a challenge to women contribution in workforce in Pakistan.

Thus, Pakistan marked ~~no~~ significant progress in achieving gender equality in workforce; however, some challenges persist.

Before moving ahead, it is essential to have a bird eye view of gender equality. Gender equality is a term used to describe a situation when all the genders at all time have equal access to all opportunities. There is no discrimination in gaining an opportunity irrespective of genders. Moreover, men, women and the other diverse genders feel same hurdles and opportunities in achieving their goals whether it is education, job opportunity or a social welfare. Thus, gender equality refers to similar opportunities to all genders in achieving their goal.

To begin with, Pakistan, along with other countries, marked following progress in

achieving gender equality in workforce.

First, different gender representation in politics demonstrates country's progress in gender equality in workforce. Political structure of any country decides the policies, which in turn shapes the future of a country. Numerous countries in the world have male-dominant political parties or representation.

However, in Pakistan, different gender representation in politics is ensured by giving them right to contest election. For example, in 2019, a transgender in Balochistan contested election.

Moreover, women representation in any political party is essential according to article 18 of Election ACT 2017. Thus, this

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argument demonstrates Pakistan's progress in achieving gender equality in workforce.

Moreover, increased gender inclusivity in labour workforce also prevents country's progress in gender equality.

Pakistan was at stark of patriarchal society with no tolerance for minority genders to work. With the passage

of time, the country's showed remarkable progress in women's participation in labour workforce. According

to International Labour Organization 2025, women's participation in labour workforce increased from

18% to 22% from 2018 - 2024. Thus, increased

gender equality in labour workforce is an indication

of the country's marked progress in achieving gender equality in workforce.

Alongwith this, inclusive genders now play as head role of corporate sectors which also demonstrates the country's progress in achieving gender equality in workforce. Before this, only one gender dominated the corporate sectors, achieving socio-economic status. Now, different genders play essential role as a head or CEO of corporate sector. Taking example of director of FKS group, a single female in the bid ceremony of cricket team of PSL succeeded in winning her favourite team. Thus, inclusive gender role as a head

of corporate sectors also presents Pakistan's progress in achieving gender equality in workforce.

Besides, Pakistan's attempt to make diverse gender eligible for work is also a stark indication of the country's marked progress in achieving gender equality in workforce.

The govt of Pakistan initiated different youth skill programs for inclusive genders to make them a skilled person, and enable them to work for the

country. These programs indicate a paradigm shift from traditional thinking of people to marginalize minority group towards an able country's assets. For this, the Punjab government initiated youth skill program for transgender

in 2025 to make them skilled individuals. Thus, government initiatives to skill different gender also present the country's progress in achieving gender equality in workforce.

Moreover, increasing participation of different genders in government sectors also demonstrates Pakistan's progress in achieving gender equality in workforce. Different genders participate in different government sectors due to availability of open merit and quota system. A specific quota is allocated to minority group to work in ~~lab~~ government sectors. For instance Nisha RAO - a ~~transgender~~ lawyer practices in today's Pakistan. Thus, enhanced participation of inclusive

genders in government sectors present the country's progress in achieving gender equality in workforce.

In a way to progress, there always remains some challenges acting as obstacles. Thus, progress in achieving gender equality in workforce possess some challenges which are illustrated below:

Low income to minority gender is a persistent challenge in achieving gender equality in workforce. Different genders work together, stay equal equal time in offices, but women and other diverse genders receive less income as compared to men. Moreover, women working in offices receive less

~~privilege~~ in the form of house accommodation, bonus and salary. According to ILO, women in Pakistan receive 40% less than men. Thus, low income is a persistent challenge in achieving gender equality in workforce.

Moreover, cultural norms present a stark challenge to gender equality in Pakistan's workforce.

The prevailing culture in Pakistan does not accept gender inclusivity in workforce.

Moreover, these patriarchal society believes in traditional gender roles, and act as a hurdle when ^{minority} genders are given their rights.

For example, a bill was passed to make CNIC for transgenders, but

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the culture prevents public to vote in favour of transgender candidate (Balochistan case). Thus, the prevailing culture of traditional gender role act as a challenge to Pakistan's gender equality in workforce.

Besides, harassment in workplace is a major challenge to the country's gender equality in workforce.

Women in workplace face major harassment, and they are forced to remain silent. This factor fears minority genders, which in turn keeps them away from engaging in social activities or working.

According to United Nations, 3 out of four women in Pakistan face harassment in their

lifetime. Thus, harassment challenge poses serious threat to gender equality in ~~labor~~ workforce.

Alongwith this, religious misinterpretation is a challenge in achieving gender equality in workforce.

Extremist clerics ~~often use~~ selective and incorrect readings of religious texts are often used to justify confining women to domestic roles, discouraging their employment, leadership, and interaction in professional environments. This ~~creates social pressure and~~ ~~resistance to women's~~ advancement, despite the fact religious itself supports work, dignity. According to UNDP - clerics in Pakistan misinterprets religious texts and use ~~as~~ a tool

to ~~unfine~~ minority genders.
Thus, ~~religious misinterpretation~~
is a ~~major~~ challenge to
Pakistan's ~~workforce~~.

Moreover, no
policy ~~formulation~~ to
relieve ~~maternal~~ women is
a ~~challenge~~ to gender
equality in Pakistan's
workforce. Such ~~policy~~
formulation ~~grants~~ maternal
leave to women, and
allow them to ~~continue~~
work after birth. However,
in Pakistan, ~~lack~~ of
such ~~policies~~ ~~presents~~ difficulties
for women to ~~work~~. The
corporate ~~heads~~, instead of
giving ~~maternal~~ leave, force
them to ~~resign~~ in their
maternal period. The women
face ~~difficulty~~ in ~~finding~~
new ~~jobs~~ after ~~giving~~

birth. Thus, no policy formulating regarding maternal leave poses a serious challenge to gender equality in Pakistan's workforce.

To conclude, Pakistan marked significant progress in achieving gender equality in workforce. Different genders representation in politics, gender inclusivity in labour workforce, and different gender's role as head of corporate sectors marks the progress of gender equality of Pakistan's workforce. Moreover, Youth Skill Programs and gender inclusivity in government sector also indicate the country's progress. However, some challenges like low income, cultural norms

and harassment ratio in workplace pose serious challenges to gender equality in Pakistan's workforce. Moreover, religious misinterpretation and policy

gaps are also major challenges to gender equality. Thus, Pakistan is on a

way to achieving gender equality as evidenced by some progress. However, some challenges act as obstacles to its progress.