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Essay Topic: Gendered imbalance in
workforce as challenge to
economic progress.

Gendered imbalance in workforce as challenge to economic progress

Outline

1. Introduction

The gendered imbalance in workplaces impedes economic advancement. However, addressing biased policies, cultural and social barriers, and skill development disparities is crucial to fostering a fair and prosperous society.

2. Understanding the link between gender inequality in the workforce and economic progress

3. How gender inequality in workforce hinders economic growth:

- a. Gender inequality in parliament hinders economic growth
- b. Gender imbalance within institutions leads to compromised service delivery
- c. Reduction in potential labour force and productivity
- d. Loss of human capital due to gender imbalance in workforce
- e. Reduction in economic growth and exports
- f. Increasing poverty, inequality and unemployment
- g. Escalation of crime rate and social unrest

4- Factors responsible for gender imbalance in workplaces:

- a. Cultural and social barriers impacting gender equality
- b. Pay gap and low wages for women
- c. Traditional Gender Role's impact
- d. Harassment's negative influence
- e. Lack of skill development for women
- f. Inadequate implementation of Women Protection Laws

5- Addressing gender imbalance in workplaces to foster economic progress:

- a. Formulation and strict implementation of workplace gender protection policies
- b. Promotion of education and skill development equitably
- c. Ensuring equal employment opportunities for all gender
- d. Implementing gender quotas for balance in workplaces

6- Conclusion

"Gender equality is a pre-condition for meeting the challenges of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development, and building governance," (Kofi Annan). The above remarks by the former secretary of the UN accentuate the significance of gender equality for economic advancement. Gender imbalance in workplace has negative effects on economic growth. Gender equality at parliament, at political level, leads to biased policy making that hinders economic development. Women's low participation in the labor market results in wastage of human capital and reduction in potential labour force and productivity, resulting in lower (GDP) Gross Domestic product. Moreover, gender imbalance within institutions stimulates a compromised service delivery. In addition to this, gender inequality engenders poverty, inequality and unemployment, resulting in social unrest. Collectively, all factors become challenge for economic progress. The main factors that contribute to gender imbalance in the workplace are social and cultural barriers, low pay for women, traditional gender roles, harassment cases, low skill development, and lack of implementation of women protection laws. To address gender imbalance in the workplace, there is a need for formulation and strict implementation of policies related to gender protection at work, provision of equal employment opportunities for all genders, embarking quotas for women in leadership positions, promotion of education and skill development in all genders.

and provision of equal opportunity for all genders in social, political and economic domains. In a nutshell, gender imbalance impedes in workplaces impedes economic progress. The factors which are responsible for gender imbalance in workplaces are discriminatory practices, social^{and} cultural barriers and governmental weakness in implementation of women's protection laws. However, gender imbalance in workplaces could be addressed by formulating and implementing workplace gender protection policies, ensuring equal employment opportunities for all genders and promoting education and skill development, leading to economic growth and development.

Exploring the intricate relationship between gender imbalance in workplaces and economic growth reveals a crucial interconnection. As gender disparity constrains the utilization of human capital, stifles innovation and hampers diversity in decision-making, it hinders full realization of economic potential. According to World Economic Forum, gender bias can lead to productivity losses of about \$ 2.8 trillion a year. Moreover, women account for half of the world's population, but only 47 percent of the world's working age population. This means that a large pool of human capital is underutilized or wasted due to

various barriers that hinder women to enter in the workforce. If these barriers were removed and women's participation rate were equal to men's, the global GDP could increase by \$28 trillion by 2025. Therefore, gender imbalance in workforce is directly linked with economic progress.

Gender inequality in parliament fosters biased policy making which in turn hinders economic progress. Inadequate representation of women and other genders fail to represent true issues of gender like women face challenges in workplaces. The law formulated on protection of women would be weak in absence of proportionate representation. A study by the World Bank found that increasing women's representation in parliament by 5 percent points can reduce corruption by 20 percent. The study also found that women's presence in parliament reduce misuse of public funds. Moreover, women's presence raises the issues of women, otherwise, it leads to male dominated policies. Therefore, gender imbalance in parliament engenders biased policy formulation, hindering economic advancement.

Gender imbalance within institutions leads to compromised service delivery. Gender inequality in health institutions affects availability and accessibility of health services, especially for women and

and girls who face specific health challenges and risks. A report by UN Women examined the impact of women's participation in health sector. Insufficient female doctors create hurdles for women and girls patients. The report highlighted that countries with more women doctors, nurses and staff in health institutions tend to have lower maternal and children mortality, higher immunization rates, and more gender responsive health policies. Similarly, in educational institutions, gender imbalance hinders the provision of quality and inclusive education. According to UNESCO, 129 million girls were out of school in 2020. The low number of female teachers incapacitates the institutions to become gender responsive institutions. Therefore, gender imbalance within institutions causes compromised service delivery.

Gender imbalance in the workforce reduces potential labour force and productivity. Women account for half of the world population, but their participation in the world economy is limited. This means that large pool of human capital is underutilized due to various barriers, reducing labour force. According to the UN Women, labour force participation

rate for women aged 25-54 is 63 percent compared to 94 percent for men, leading to lower participation of women in labour force. Resultantly, the productivity of economies reduces, leading to lower GDP. Thus, gender inequality in the workforce lowers participation of potential labour force and productivity of economy.

Apart from reduced participation of labour force and lower productivity, gender imbalance in workplaces wastes human capital, resulting in diminished economic development. Half of the world's population comprises of women; compared to men, women's participation in economies are nominal, leading to wastage of human capital. According to the World Bank Report, globally, for the 148 countries included in the analysis, the loss in human capital wealth due to gender inequality is estimated \$ 160.2 trillion; if it is assumed that women would earn as much as men.

This is about twice the value of GDP globally. Human capital could increase by 21.7 percent globally, and total wealth by 14 percent with gender equality in earning. Therefore, gender inequality in workplaces engenders the diminishment of human capital; such high cost of gender inequality, too resultantly, decreases economic growth.

Gender inequality in workplaces

is not just matter of human capital, it hampers overall growth of economy. ~~The~~ Gender inequality in workplace constrains ~~overall~~ productivity of the economy. In interconnected world, lower production leads to decreasing trade with the world, culminating in lower export. The World Bank's research unveils that countries that fail to address gender inequality may face reputational risks and limitations in their trade relationships, leading to lower exports and economic growth. Thus, gender inequality in workplaces has detrimental effects on economic growth and export potential.

Gender discrimination in workplaces also ~~elicit~~ poverty, inequality and unemployment. It limits opportunities and fair treatment for individuals based on their gender. Prevailing pay gap contributes to economic inequality which can push families into poverty. Gender inequality can result in occupational segregation in jobs; certain jobs are dominated by one gender. This can limit opportunities which causes unemployment. Further, harassment and hostile environment for women ~~time~~ restricts participation of women in workplaces. Consequently, it contributes to poverty, inequality, and unemployment.

Owing to gender inequality in workplaces, poverty, inequality and unemployment incite social unrest and crime, leading to hampering sustainable economic progress. A society where social unrest prevails, prone to discontent and frustration. This frustration can manifest in form of social unrest and crime. Economic challenges due to gender inequality may resort to crime as means of survival, including theft, fraud or involvement in the informal economy. It could also lead to protest by populace owing to economic inequality which can escalate into larger social unrest if grievances are not addressed. Thus, social unrest and crime owing to gender inequality ~~owing~~ in workplaces impede overall progress of society.

Examining the factors responsible for this cause sheds light on root of the problem. Several key factors contribute to gender inequality in workplaces including cultural and social barriers. Social and cultural barriers hamper women to work in public settings. It is considered, tabo, in the most of society, the working of women. Deep-rooted gender stereotypes and traditional roles assigned to women continue to influence expectations. These expectations discourage women from seeking positions in

fields traditionally dominated by men. Moreover, cultural norms regarding family responsibilities can limit women's ability to work or fully participate in the workforce as they often expect to prioritize caregiving duties. In consequence, social and cultural impediments restrict to be part of workforce in public setting.

Besides social and cultural barrier, pay gap and low wages discourage women to work in workplaces. The wage disparities between genders continue to be a pervasive issue, with women often receiving less compensation for the same work as their male counterparts. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics, in the United States, as of 2021, women earned approximately 82 percent for every dollar earned by men, low wages can lead to reduced financial security, making it difficult for individuals to cover basic living expenses, and save for future.

Therefore, lower wages and pay gap discourage women, leading to lower economic growth.

In addition to this, gender's women traditional roles hamper them to participate in public workforce, resulting in lower economic growth. women's traditional role

of doing home chores, caring family restricts women to pursue their career. It has made a taboo by society that women have to do home chores and responsible for family care. In south Asia, women are considered scared ^{individuals} to remain within boundaries of home. If any woman courageously breaks stereotype and joins any firm, faces a lot of blacklashes by neighbours and society. Consequently, traditional roles of women obstruct them to become part of any workforce in public settings.

If any of women breaks the barrier of traditional role of gender, the harassment at work aggravates the situation for women at work. The negative influence of harassment at work discourages women to be part of formal economy. Women at work feel unsafe. According to a report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), harassment and discrimination contribute to a gender gap in labour force participation, leading to loss of talent and skills. Eventually, they hesitate to enter certain industries or companies. The World Economic Forum's gender gap report consistently highlights disparities at workplaces, with harassment being a contributing

factor. Therefore, harassment in the workplace poses a significant obstacle to women's participation in the labour force, thereby embedding economic progress.

causes ^{limited} women access to skill development, underutilization of half of the world population in workforce. Women compare to men are less skilled. They have limited opportunities to learn skills, owing various social, cultural barriers. Moreover, evidence from various studies and reports highlights the immense potential that remains untapped. According to the World Bank, gender gaps in access to education and skill development opportunities persist in many countries, resulting in women being less equipped with necessary skills for labour market. Furthermore, IMF has emphasised the economic benefits of reducing gender inequality. It would add billions of dollars to global GDP. Thus women limited access to skill development restricts women participation in workforce, leading to lower economic growth.

The inadequate implementation of women protection laws serves

as a significant impediment to women's full and active participation in the workplace. While many countries have enacted legislation to safeguard women's rights in the workplace, the effective enforcement of these laws often falls short. This lack of implementation not only perpetuates a culture of gender inequality and harassment but also dissuades women entering or staying in the labour force. According to World Bank, a study reveals that even when legal protections exist, the gap between formal laws and actual workplace practices persists, undermining women's confidence in their safety and equality. Thus, loose implementation of women protection laws creates a sense of insecurity in women, thereby limiting women's participation in the labour force and lowering economic advancement.

However, to address the gender inequality in workplaces requires formulation and implementation of women's protection laws which play a pivotal role in stimulating women's participation in workplaces. These laws provide a robust framework that safeguards women's rights, ensuring they are protected from discrimination, harassment, and unequal treatment in employment settings, when

women secure in their workplaces, they are more likely to persevere and sustain careers, thus, contributing to economic progress. Moreover, such legislation can foster a culture of inclusivity and equality, encouraging employers to promote gender equality and diversity. There are an example in the world who promoted gender equality, achieved the goal of economic development, like Rwanda whose first parliament consists of 65 percent of women, simultaneously their economy is ~~to~~ fostering as all population, including women, are participating in the economy. And they protected women at workplaces through effective legislation and strict implementation of relevant laws. Thus, formulation and implementation of women's protection laws are ~~the~~ cardinal for women's participation in workplaces thereby increasing the economic growth.

Another important factor to consider is imparting skills to women, which will boost women's participation in workplaces, thereby contributing to economy. When women are provided ^{with} more opportunities for education, training and acquiring new skills, it will not only enhances their employability but also boost their confidence to

take part in the workforce. In Bangladesh, women were provided training and skills which related to textile industry which in turn, boosted textile sector, where maximum number of women are participating in workforces. A research by the World Bank has ~~shown~~ shown that increasing or enhancing their skills ~~boost~~ of women boosts economy. In another places, the SEWA (Self employment Women's Association) in India offers training various trades to low-income women. These programs have empowered women to enter the work places. Thus, skill development of women plays role of catalyst in increasing women participation in workplaces, contributing to economic development.

After enhancing skill development of women, it is necessary to provide equal employment opportunities to women for the participation of women in workforces. Gender disparity is pervasive in the world. Women are discriminated in job opportunities. This discrimination ~~and~~, in jobs, against women deeply rooted in fabric of societies. Equal opportunities for women encourage women to participate in public workplaces. The case study of Rwanda is clear example of provision of equal opportunities.

to women, enhanced women participation in workplaces, thereby fostering economic development. Moreover, in Bangladesh, Grameen bank's microfinance initiative for women were a revolutionary step which empowered women to become part of formal economy. Thus, provision of equal opportunities for women encourages women's participation in public workplaces, thereby increasing economic development.

It is also necessary to set quotas for women in employment opportunities which is marginalized segment of society ensuring the participation in the workforce for better economic development. Quotas ensure a more balanced representation of genders, promoting diversity. It reduces gender based discrimination. Moreover, quotas can help address the gender pay gap by providing women with more opportunities for leadership roles which tends to have higher leadership roles. From economic point of view, diverse teams are better equipped to understand and cater to the needs of diverse customer bases, potentially increasing growth of firms.

Thus, embarking quotas for women can be effective in promoting women's participation in workplaces along with other initiatives, thereby bringing economic prosperity.

In conclusion, economic growth is hindered by gender inequality in workplaces. Gender inequality is pervasive in various public and private institutions. At political level, gender imbalance in parliament leads to biased policy formulation. Similarly, at public institutions, gender inequality compromises service delivery of the institutions, thereby limiting economic progress. Moreover, gender inequality in workplaces discourages women participation leading to reduction in workforce and productivity. Loss of human capital due to gender imbalance stagnates economic growth and exports, decreasing production. Socially, it engenders social unrest in a society, resulting in poverty and increasing crime rates. However, there are socio-economic and political causes which can cause gender imbalance in workplaces. Nevertheless, gender imbalance could be addressed through strict implementation of existing gender laws and formulation of laws to protect women in workplaces. Moreover, promotion of education and skills development enhances opportunities for women. Emarking quotas ensures equality of genders. Resultantly, it fosters economic development.