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"The intersection of Race and Gender: How Woman of Color experience Double Discrimination"

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1.1. Attention grabber

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1.3. Despite progress made in recent decade, the woman of color face significant disparities in healthcare, education, judiciary and legal rights, politics, business, sports, media, literature, administration, bureaucracy sectors.

2. Education Sector

2.1 Educational disparity in ethnic communities.

2.2 Educational discrimination in patriarchal societies.

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“Imagine facing not just one, but two layers of bias, one for your gender and another for your race. For women of color, this double discrimination is an everyday reality that shapes their experiences in ways which are often overlooked or misunderstood.”

Women of color face a unique set of challenges and barriers due to the intersection of racism and sexism. This intersectional discrimination affects their social, economic and political lives. The concept of intersectionality was first introduced by **Kimberle Crenshaw (1989)** to describe how multiple forms of oppression intersect and compound. Women of color experience both racism and sexism, which cannot be

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separated or addressed in isolation. This intersectionality results in unique experiences of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion. Despite progress made in recent decades, women of color continue to experience significant disparities in different sectors of life. This essay will explain the ways by which in education, healthcare, judiciary and legal rights, politics, business, sports, media, literature, bureaucracy and administration sectors, women of color face challenges and barriers due to race and gender.

First comes education sector of Pakistan where women of color face a unique form of double discrimination rooted in both gender and ethnic or racial biases. Women from

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marginalized ethnic communities often encounter additional barriers compared to their ethnic majority counterparts, impacting their access to education, career development and representation in leadership roles. A report by (UNESCO) 2020 found that ethnic minority women in Pakistan have lower enrollment rates in schools and universities, especially in rural areas.

This disparity is exacerbated by gender-based discrimination, with women of color facing cultural norms that prioritize male education over female education, particularly in conservative regions. For instance, the literacy rate for women in Balochistan is 27%, lower than the national average of 46% for women.

Furthermore women of color often face exclusion from

leadership position. According to the **HRCP** report of 2021, women of colour make up a small percentage of educational administrators, policymakers, despite their active involvement as teachers.

These women are often sidelined in decision-making roles due to both ethnic (prejudice) prejudices and gender biases. This double discrimination limits their influence on educational reforms and perpetuates systemic inequalities in the sector hindering their professional growth and reinforcing social exclusion.

Second comes health-care sector of Pakistan where women of colour face double discrimination in healthcare as they experience both gender-based and ethnic or racial biases. Women from marginalized ethnic communities are particularly vulnerable to

disparities in healthcare access, quality and outcomes. According to 2020 World Health Organization (WHO) report, women in rural and underdeveloped areas where many ethnic minorities resides, face limited access to healthcare services.

The maternal mortality rate in Balochistan, for example is **297** deaths per **100000** live births, far higher than the national average of **140**, reflecting both gender and regional inequalities.

Cultural factors including preference for male healthcare providers and traditional practices further restrict women of color from seeking medical care. A 2017 study by **UNFPA** found that women in marginalized communities are less likely to visit healthcare facilities due to social-cultural barriers including family restrictions,

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face discrimination within the judicial system where their cases are dismissed or under-prioritized due to both their gender and ethnic background. For instance in areas like Balochistan, the legal representation for women from minority communities is limited with only **6%** of lawyers in the region being women and fewer being from ethnic minorities.

These women often lack access to legal resources and face language barriers further complicating their ability to navigate the justice system. Moreover ethnic prejudice within the law enforcement and courts leads to biased rulings where women of color are often treated as less credible and their complaints are dismissed. As a result, these women are more vulnerable to legal injustice facing both gender-based and ethnic discrimination

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in seeking legal protection and redress.

Fourth one is politics in Pakistan where women of color face compounded discrimination due to the intersection of both gender and ethnic biases. Women from marginalized ethnic groups encounter significant barriers to political participation, leadership and representation. While women's participation has increased, women of color remain under-represented in key political positions. A 2021 report by the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) found that women represent only 22% of the national parliament and women from ethnic minorities make up a significantly smaller proportion of this group. Patriarchal mindset hinders their participation in

political leadership. In 2018, there were 40 million women voters but only 40% casted vote. Furthermore political violence, harassment and discrimination further discourage women of color from entering in politics. According to HRCP (2020) report women from marginalized ethnic groups are disproportionately affected by political violence making it even harder for them to secure political roles or influence policy decisions. This double discrimination limits the diversity of perspectives in Pakistan's political landscape undermining inclusive governance.

Apart from politics, in business sector in Pakistan, women of color face gender discrimination. Female entrepreneurship rate in Pakistan is just 4pc against 7.2pc in Bangladesh and 14pc in India dawn news in Pakistan.

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Among more than 5 million small and medium enterprises in the country only 8% are owned by women as per report of **Asian Development Bank**. Unfortunately in almost all business sectors women have been drastically ignored because of their conservative families heads.

Societal taboos hinder women participation in the realm of business. Pakistan ranks **142/146** in global gender gap index. The social fabric of Pakistan does not provide a safe platform for women to operate SMEs. The conservative mindsets of Pakistan look upon women working in shops and stores. The society claims men as the sole breadwinner of the family. Despite awareness campaigns and women rights in religious terms, honour killings and degeneration of weak gender takes place in the country. Woman

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of color lack mentorship and support system that help other succeed in the business world.

Next comes sports sector in Pakistan, ^{in which} women of color face double discrimination as they encounter both gender and ethnic biases that hinder their participation and success.

Women from marginalized ethnic communities experience compound challenges in a field where both ethnic and gender stereotypes are pervasive. According to 2020 report by the Pakistan Sports Board, women's participation in sports remain low particularly among ethnic minorities due to cultural restrictions and societal norms that limit their freedom to engage in physical activities. A 2019 study by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) found that women of color rural and underprivileged areas face additional barriers including

a lack of access to sports facilities, coaching and sponsorships. In regions like Balochistan and KPK where many ethnic minorities live, traditional gender roles discourage girls from pursuing sports while ethnic biases further marginalize their involvement in mainstream competitions. Moreover limiting their chances of being selected for national teams or receiving recognition. A 2021 report by the Human Right Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) highlighted that these women are not only excluded from leadership roles in sports organizations but also face harassment and dismissal in male-dominated sports environments. This double discrimination prevents women of color from excelling in sports and perpetuates their under-representation.

Then comes media sector in Pakistan where

women of color experience a unique form of double discrimination at the intersection of race and gender. Media representation often perpetuates stereotypes that marginalize women from non-Pakistani ethnic backgrounds reinforcing both racial and gender biases. Women from ethnic minorities face underrepresentation and are often portrayed through reductive and negative lenses further perpetuating harmful stereotypes. In contrast fair-skinned women from more frequently given prominent roles, showcasing a performance for Eurocentric standards of beauty and femininity.

According to 2021 study only 16% of media content represented women from minority ethnic backgrounds despite these women constituting over 25% of population. This disparity illustrates

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also experience limited access to promotions with reports indicating that ethnic minorities face higher barriers to careers advancement. These systematic inequalities are exacerbated by cultural norms and institutional biases.

Lastly in Pakistan, women of color face double discrimination in administration and legislation due to the intersection of racial and gender biases. Women from ethnic minorities are severely under-represented in administrative and legislative roles. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, women hold only **20%** of the seats in the National Assembly with women of color facing traditional barriers in participation. The 2021 **(GGG)** report ranks Pakistan 153 globally. Males are dominated in administration and

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legislation.

To conclude, women of color experience double discrimination due to the intersection of racism and sexism. Addressing these disparities requires a comprehensive approach that acknowledges and addresses the unique challenges faced by (employed) women of color. Policymakers, educators, employers, healthcare providers, politicians, businesswomen, players, bureaucrats must work together to create equitable opportunities and address the systemic barriers that perpetuates discrimination.

