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Paper: Gender Studies

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PART II

QUESTION NO. 7

A. Introduction:

Gender-based violence (GBV) is inflicting harm or suffering to individuals on the basis of their gender identity and orientation. The violence includes physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm and can also include threats, coercion or deprivation. Although all genders may suffer gender-based violence in their lives, women constitute the overwhelming proportion of victims who suffer gender-based violence. The violence persists in almost every part of the world, but in Pakistan, it predominantly exists and sustains itself on the basis of social, cultural and religious misunderstandings, and is largely overlooked as a norm. Although there are numerous reasons behind the gender-based violence which include legal loopholes, deeprooted patriarchy, and intersectionality,

socio-economic factors such as unemployment, poverty, and gender-based labor roles play a significant role in shaping the pattern and intensity of Gender-based violence in Pakistan.

B. Socio-economic factors and GBV in Pakistan:

Gender-based violence does not exist in isolation but it is institutionalized against vulnerable groups in society of the world, and perpetuates itself in different forms and shapes. In Pakistan, GBV is grounded socio-cultural dynamics and ~~is~~ reinforces itself in a more detrimental form in socio-economic factors. The violence not only leads to victimization of vulnerable groups in the country but also hinders the national growth and progress by curtailing inclusivity. Of numerous socio-economic factors, unemployment, poverty and gendered labor roles remain most detrimental in ~~exer~~ exacerbating GBV in the country.

A. Unemployment and GBV:

In Pakistan, unemployment remains one of the most serious issues and leads to different types of

exploitations and violence besides economic. Women in the country face high levels of unemployment, according to some estimates only 22-24% are employed in occupations.

The remaining women population is either engaged or engaged in household chores and their participation is not counted in the national gross-domestic product (GDP). On the other hand, men also face high levels of unemployment in the country which leads to economic and financial strain and eventually to contribute to itself to in GBV.

i) How unemployment led leads to GBV:

Unemployment is a great source of GBV in the country where vulnerable groups are subjected to violence in different forms.

a) Sexual Violence

Vulnerable groups like women and transgenders are subjected to sexual abuse such as rape by men who exploit their weakness to fulfill ulterior motives, on the pretext of providing employment and career opportunities.

b) Psychological Violence

Vulnerable groups seeking employment are subjected to psychological violence by employers on the pretext of negotiating salaries and benefits or besides threatening to reject their applications. This includes intimidation, coercion, bullying, threatening etc.

c) Physical Violence:

Physical violence against women increases when their spouses, fathers or brothers are unemployed and suffer with financial strain. In order to reinforce their control over the female family members in the face of ~~decreasing~~ draining financial resources, men subject women relatives to GBV which includes beating, clapping, kind Kicking etc.

d) Economic violence:

In different socio-cultural settings, women and transgenders are subjected to discrimination and not allowed to work in professional roles. This leads to the economic violence on the basis of the gender identities.

Like in Pakistan, many women are not allowed to work due to patriarchal norms despite having educational credentials.

ii) How poverty leads to GBV in Pakistan:

Poverty in Pakistan is one of the most serious socio-economic problems which not only deprives the population of a dignified living but also multiplies GBV against vulnerable groups like women. There are different forms of violence which stem from poverty as the country hosts around 44% of poor population.

a) Domestic violence:

Although domestic violence exists in almost all households irrespective of the financial conditions, it remains rampant in poor households. Poorly stricken houses suffer with mental stress and male counterparts release their stress by subjecting women to physical abuse, torture, and psychological trauma.

b) Sexual violence:

Deeprooted poverty forces marginalized groups such as women and transgenders to resort to begging in public places, which increases the vulnerability to experience sexual violence in such as rape, harassment and abuse. Women begging in residential areas are more susceptible to face this kind of GBV.

C) Economic Violence:

Women belonging to poor backgrounds face enhanced economic violence in Pakistan. They are often engaged in ~~to~~ labour extensive jobs such as labourer at brick kilns, agriculture, and dairy farms and are not paid for their work equally as men. They are fired without any prior notice and remunerations are ~~for~~ forfeited by employers. This leads to their economic deprivation and pertains to GBV.

iii) Gendered labor roles and GBV:

In Pakistan, socio-cultural norms ~~have~~ dictate socio-economic factors and labor roles are assigned to men and women according to their genders. This definition and tolerance for labor roles also varies from subculture to subculture. As women living in tribal areas face strict restriction in public life and roles while the conditions are less restrictive in urban centres like Lahore and Islamabad, however, GBV violence exists in both subcultures.

For example, professions such as journalism, ~~po~~ law enforcement, and law are ~~can~~ not considered encouraged for women while professions like ~~p~~ medicine, nursing, and teaching

are considered permissible for women. The entry of ~~more~~ women in male-dominated professions in the country increases their likelihood of facing GBV due to persisting gender bias in the society.

a) Psychological violence

Women in professions like politics and media are more prone to face GBV.

- For example, Punjab Information Minister **Azma Bukhari** suffered GBV psychological GBV after her doctored deepfake video was released by her political opponents on social media for being extraordinarily active in politics.

b) Sexist remarks:

Women in professions like police, law and other male-dominated fields face commonly face sexist remarks on the basis of their gender identity.

- For example: A woman lawyer in Islamabad suffered sexist remark from a judge in the courtroom while presenting her arguments.

c) Sexual harassment:

Women in male-dominated

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professions frequently report facing sexual harassment at work places from their male counterparts.

Hundreds of such cases have reported from women but legal action remains limited.

C. Conclusion:

Socio-economic factors which lead to gender-based violence are ^{also} deeprooted in socio-cultural norms. The socio-economic factors like unemployment, poverty and gendered labour roles not only cause physical, sexual, economic and psychological suffering to marginalized groups in Pakistan but also badly impact the prospects of their empowerment and upward social mobility.