

## Investigating the Gender Gap and Economic Participation of Women in Pakistan—A Systematic Literature Review

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Keywords	Abstract
Gender Gap, Economic Participation, Women Empowerment, Gender Inequality, Women's Rights, SLR.	<i>Pakistan's economy has failed to experience any kind of rapid growth due to the gender disparity, and the country is currently ranked among the worst countries across the world. Regarding women's economic involvement in Pakistan, there is a significant difference across each of the labor market indexes. The study aimed at investigating the gender gap and economic participation of women in Pakistan. It adopted SLR to explore the most relevant articles from 2018 to 2024. From the in-depth study of a wide range of scholarly articles, the study concluded that patriarchal society in Pakistan controls the lives of women, as women in such societies do not enjoy equal rights, and the absence of representation of women in Pakistan's economy highlights issues of gender equity and development. The study recommended that the government and private sectors organization focus on placing an emphasis on programs for female entrepreneurship, with a particular focus on technological and advanced levels of education for the women, thus increasing their chances and ability to become financially independent.</i>

### INTRODUCTION

Equal economic rights are a fundamental right possessed by men and women, but women are consistently paid less than males worldwide. When it comes to gender equality, Pakistan is currently ranked among the worst countries across the world, only beating Yemen, Afghanistan, and Iraq. A report put forward by the World Economic Forum (2021) based on the Global Gender Gap placed Pakistan 153<sup>rd</sup> out of 156 countries on the gender parity index, and also, Pakistan came in seventh place out of eight South Asian countries. Makwela (2022) further reported that the country has failed significantly to improve the gender parity score in the last 16 years, as it was 0.553 in 2006 and 0.556 in 2021. This also indicates that Female Labor Force Participation (FLFP) in urban Pakistan is among the lowest in the world, having hovered around 10 percent for more than 20 years.

Moreover, the patriarchal society in Pakistan controls the lives of women, as women in such societies do not enjoy equal rights. Ashraf and Ali's (2018) study indicated that Pakistani women traditionally acquire their status from their families, as men and women both differ from one another in terms of their health, education, work prospects, income, personal security, ownership over possessions, and involvement in politics.

Pakistan's ranking for gender equality, along with women's participation, remains the lowest across the globe. Considering the recent reviews and studies, there has been a lack of literature on the current area, as existing studies investigated the impact of financial development on gender imbalance and poverty in the Pakistani context and also evaluated socioeconomic well-being and women's status in Pakistan, providing an empirical analysis (Ashraf and Ali 2018). Therefore, the goal of this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is to review existing studies on the root causes of the gender gap and how it affects Pakistani women's economic empowerment.

The study aims to investigate the gender gap in economic participation in Pakistan. For this purpose, the paper outlines the following objectives:

1. To critically evaluate the effectiveness of policies and interventions implemented to address the gender gap and promote women's economic participation in Pakistan.
2. To evaluate the key factors contributing to the gender gap in economic participation among women in Pakistan.
3. To identify the challenges affecting women's economic participation in Pakistan.
4. To develop future recommendations for the policymaker stakeholders aimed at bridging the gap and enhancing women's economic participation in Pakistan.

Below is the study's research question:

What are the key factors contributing to the gender gap in economic participation among women in Pakistan?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Challenges Affecting Women's Economic Participation in Pakistan:** Gender equality and economic progress in Pakistan are helped by higher female labor force participation. In this case, to improve women's engagement, policy measures have to address mobility issues, increase digital literacy, and enhance financial access. The lack of representation of women in Pakistan's economy highlights issues of gender equity and development. According to Shaikh (2023), the lack of women's participation in Pakistan's economy is both a gender equity and developmental concern. The economic case for focusing on women's economic empowerment is clear: if their participation was at par with men, Pakistan's GDP could increase by 60% by 2025.

Choudhry et al. (2019) found that the barriers preventing women from participating have been extensively written about and explored as patriarchal mindsets and social norms that restrict women's mobility and choice to work, including concerns about mobility and access to transportation, the burden of unpaid childcare, domestic work, the lack of supportive policy (such as maternity leave laws and regulations at work), and access to credit and finance, which are the key challenges affecting women towards economic empowerment in Pakistan.

Traditions around women's validness frequently put an emphasis on marriage and having children, preventing women from pursuing formal education or work. The most common reason given by 83% of women who do not work outside the home is housekeeping. Even in numerous

cities of Pakistan, a wide range of childcare and cleaning responsibilities restrict women from functioning outside the home (Makwela, 2022).

### **Factors Contributing to Pakistani Women's Economic Participation Gap among Genders:**

Pakistani society's significantly rooted patriarchal system is one of the key factors contributing to the gender gap in economic participation among women in Pakistan (Choudhry et al., 2019). Gender stereotypes restrict women to home environments, restricting their ability to move around freely and pursue professional goals and do something with their life and career objectives. The system of unequal economic opportunities is another key factor contributing to the gender gap in economic participation among women in Pakistan. In this situation, Kanat et al. (2024) argued that there is a huge gap in the accessibility of financial assets along with employment in the market. In addition, Jabeen et al. (2020) further argued that women face issues and challenges while trying to get loans and owning assets and land, along with high-age employment, which forces them to work in low-wage or unpaid domestic labor industries, affecting their household income as well. The systematic depreciation of women's contribution was further indicated by the gender wage gap that still exists, as mentioned by the study of Javed et al. (2020). The systemic depreciation of women's contributions was further shown by the gender wage gap that still exists (Javed et al., 2022).

The findings underscore the need for multi-sectoral approaches to address the root causes of gender disparities and promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Pakistan. Pakistani stakeholders, policymakers, and legislators need to prioritise gender equality by increasing women's participation in education, economic opportunities, and healthcare facilities and initiate laws and acts to protect women from violence, harassment, and discrimination. Policymakers and feminist groups can work together to advance gender equality and build a more inclusive society for women in Pakistan (Sarwar & Farid, 2024).

The status of gender equality within Pakistan's justice system indicates both advancements and enduring disparities in multiple areas. Although gradual gains in the involvement of women in the judiciary, prosecution, and legal fields are encouraging, substantial obstacles still exist in attaining equal participation and guaranteeing justice delivery that is sensitive to gender issues. The lack of women in leadership positions, shortcomings in the provision of legal aid, and insufficient resources assigned to national commissions reveal structural challenges that require prompt action. The information detailed in this report emphasizes the need for a comprehensive strategy to tackle these problems (National Commission on the Status of Women, 2023).

Moreover, focusing on at-risk populations like women and children through specialized initiatives, improved legal structures, and collaborations between public and private sectors can assist in closing the current disparities in justice access. Women encounter gender-related inequalities in healthcare settings. As reported by UNICEF, Pakistan's maternal mortality rate stands at 186 deaths per 100,000 live births, which is above the global average. Barriers such as insufficient infrastructure, societal stereotypes, and restricted access to reproductive health services prevent women from obtaining hospital care, nutrition, and healthcare, leading to unfavorable health outcomes for them (National Gender Development Framework, 2022).

A comprehensive review of the literature would show that women in Pakistan encounter major obstacles to economic involvement due to issues such as detrimental cultural norms, restricted access to education and resources, and gender-based discrimination in the workplace.

Education is a light of hope that offers a route towards closing the gender gap in Pakistan's economic landscape. The studies conducted by Pasha (2021) and Khalid et al. (2020) indicated a strong correlation as household economic well-being improves as women climb the educational ladder. Education provides women the ability to question societal conventions, make informed choices, and take an active role in the employment market. Such transformative potential was also emphasized by Ashraf and Ali (2018), as the authors contended that education may threaten old gender stereotypes and open the door to a society with greater equality in which women's abilities and contributions are fully recognized. It can be stated that Pakistan may activate an unconscious power that can drive individual families and the nation as a whole toward a better, more prosperous future by placing high focus on providing women with an accessible and high-quality education.

The literature review on the gender gap in economic participation in Pakistan reveals several gaps, including the absence of detailed, region-specific studies examining how social norms affect women's involvement in the labor market. Additionally, there is a need to explore the role of technology and access to digital resources in shaping economic opportunities for women. The intersection of gender with ethnic and religious diversity within economic contexts has also been insufficiently examined. Furthermore, there is a demand for more longitudinal research and comprehensive qualitative data to better understand the changing nature of these issues over time and across various sectors and family dynamics.

## **Theoretical Framework**

**Gendered Organizational Theory:** According to Rodriguez and Guenther (2022), the theory of Gendered Organizational Theory investigates how organizations' structures, practices, and cultures, at times without conscious awareness, create and sustain gender disparities. It further claimed that these apparently gender-inclusive workplaces are actually highly gendered environments that disadvantage women and benefit males. The theory explains the ways that even apparently neutral workplaces disadvantage women in Pakistan. Traditional hierarchies limit Pakistani women's supporting roles while giving priority to masculine attributes. Chawla and Sharma (2016) argued that pay disparities, biased hiring practices, and the gendered division of labor all cause inequality. On the other hand, workplace cultures that ignore harassment or encourage discriminatory conduct create antagonism, thus affecting women's ability to work freely in the organization. McIntosh et al. (2015) argued that extended work hours conflict with parental responsibilities, insufficient coaching impedes development, and biased evaluations minimize the contributions. In relation to the theory, it is recommended that organizations must evaluate their rules and regulations, provide flexible work schedules, encourage mentorship, and also provide gender-sensitive training in order to remove these barriers. In order to establish conditions where women can thrive, participate fully, and accomplish their potential, which will eventually benefit both individuals and Pakistan's economic progress, it is significant to acknowledge and address the gendered aspect of workplaces and promote women towards economic participation.

**Empirical Evidence:** Pakistan's economy has failed to experience any kind of rapid growth due to the gender disparity, as a dark picture is presented by empirical evidence. A study indicating a strong positive relationship between women's education and household economic well-being was demonstrated by Khalid et al. (2020), as the authors underscore the power of education to strengthen individuals and end the cycle of poverty.

However, Javed et al. (2022) show an increasing disparity between wages, with women earning extremely less for comparable work than males, thus showing evidence of the structural underappreciation of their efforts. On the other hand, Kanat et al. (2024) presented significant and valuable insight into the detrimental impacts of financial discrimination, demonstrating how unequal access to capital and resources women face leads to formal employment or dependency. Jabeen et al. (2020) extend the above statistics and address the unique challenges in relation to the agricultural labor industries. The numerous barriers women face in the corporate sector, which range from discriminatory hiring practices to societal expectations, were clearly depicted by Sarwar and Imran (2019).

## METHODOLOGY

The study by Snyder (2019) stated that Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is defined as a comprehensive method for selecting, assessing, and interpreting all relevant studies that meet the subject and research question. The current paper adopted SLR methodology to select and evaluate relevant sources to investigate the gender gap and economic participation of women in Pakistan. In addition, the paper adhered to the predetermined principles to ensure a thoroughness and applicability of the review process. Various databases such as Stringer Link, Google Scholar, and Science Direct were used to select and find out the relevant articles for a thorough examination as the year was determined to be 2018 to 2024.

**Table 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Focus	Studies focusing on the gender gap in economic participation among women in Pakistan.	Studies not focusing on the gender gap in economic participation among women in Pakistan.
Language	Studies published in English.	Studies not published in English.
Publication Type	Studies are being peer-reviewed articles.	Non-peer-reviewed sources such as conference abstracts, editorials, commentaries, or letters to the editor.
Year	Studies including published from 2018 onwards	Studies omitted published before 2018

**Screening Process:** The beginning stage of the screening process included an in-depth examination of databases when creating a significant amount of data on publications on the gender gap in women's economic involvement in Pakistan. In addition, to handle the huge volume of data of the content in the study, the process of screening initially emphasized the analysis of the study's title and abstract of the papers that were selected for the examination. The main part of the procedures was to demonstrate every article's applicability and readability and specific inclusion criteria in relation to the objectives. On the other hand, papers that met all the

specific criteria and were also relevant based on their titles and abstracts were obtained for further examination to meet the objectives. At the end, after obtaining the complete text of all the relevant studies, their appropriateness for inclusion in the review was carefully evaluated.

**Keywords:** When investigating the literature for information on Pakistani women's economic engagement and the gender gap, the paper's particular keywords were pertinent to the topic. The important criteria that helped in locating the relevant publications were "gender gap", "economic empowerment", "gender inequality", "women", and "Pakistan". Additionally, Boolean operators, including 'AND', 'OR', and 'NOT', were employed to effectively combine the key terms and enhance the search outcomes. The goal of this search approach is to find as many relevant papers as possible that specifically cover the areas of my research topic. The found articles are evaluated using this search method in accordance with predetermined selection criteria to make sure they are pertinent and appropriate for inclusion in the SLR.

Moreover, in SLR, evaluating the articles' quality is essential, and there are a number of methods available to help with this. In order to validate research findings, the researcher has taken care to ensure that the quality of selected papers is checked (Rosella et al., 2016). At each stage, a different reviewer assessed the theme analysis with regard to the validity and reliability of the results. It was further analyzed as the themes that were created to make sure that there are no misunderstandings and the findings are relevant in relation to the research question.

## FINDINGS

**Table 2: Findings**

S. No	Authors	Aim of the studies	Methodologies	Findings	Recommendations
1	Kanat et al. (2024)	The study investigated the impact of financial development on gender imbalance of poverty in the context of Pakistan	Bayer and Hanck co-integration method and the ARDL bound test data from 1985 to 2022.	The findings of the study states that, economic growth is a reliable technique in order to decrease the poverty level in Pakistan and reducing gender disparity can aid to alleviate poverty levels in the country.	It was suggested that that government could focus on establishing a strategic plan in order to minimize gender inequality and poverty by introducing suitable policies in the context of financial sector and economic growth.
2	Bukhari et al. (2019)	The current paper highlighted the practices of gender discrimination and also identifies the problems and its solutions in Pakistan and also examines the role of played women in Pakistani society and also the factors contribution by women.	Secondary quantitative	The study article identifies gender inequality in Pakistan, with a focus on women's unequal socioeconomic circumstances and limited decision-making capacity. It draws attention to the frequency of crimes committed against women and urges women's empowerment in order to attain equality. The study highlights how crucial it is to grant women equal rights and opportunities in accordance with the teachings	It recommended to provide equal status to women and them suitably equally and powerful and strong in the society empowering them and a drive against them a domestic violence and gender discrimination.

				of the Prophet Muhammad and the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.	
3	Ashraf and Ali (2018)	The study analyzed the effect of socioeconomic well-being on women's status in the context of Pakistan, and also providing overview the women's status in Pakistan	United Nations Development program (UNDP) gender quality index utilizing data from 1980 to 2014	The findings of the study indicated that globalization has a significant and negative long run relationship with women's status; thus explaining that by increasing the globalization the women's level is falling in the country.	It recommended that, Pakistan needs to improve its socioeconomic structure to attain the desired level of women's status.
4	Sarwar and Imran (2019)	The study sheds light on the career prospects of women working in Pakistan's patriarchal society.	Qualitative research design	The study found hurdles when it comes to career for Pakistani women are multifaceted and include personal preferences, workplace discrimination, and social expectations. Favoritism, work-life imbalances, and religious conventions.	It suggested promoting interventions at societal and organizational levels.
5	Khalid et al. (2020)	The study investigated the extent of women's empowerment in the district of Punjab, Pakistan and its division along rural and urban regions.	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) and logistic regression model	It was found that, 34.91% women in Punjab considered empowered with a significant disparities between urban and rural regions. It also discovered that, socioeconomic factors such as income, education, and asset ownership pay a key role in terms of achieving gender equality in Punjab.	It suggested that to make interventions towards tackling both societal barriers and invidious limitations of the study.
6	Jabeen et al. (2020)	The study evaluated the impact of women's traditional economic activities that supplement their household economic directly through earning income and indirectly through savings expenditure and also assessed that factors that influenced their performance and productivity.	Primary Quantitative (Survey method)	The study discovered that major decisions in household are taken by male members due to strong patriarchal values and norms, and development projects by NGOs and government sectors have play a key role in providing credit, awareness, and training that risen particularly in the regions of south and north. It was also concluded that factors such as demographic, economic cultural, religious negatively influence women productive potential.	The study recommended that, per-interventions demands assessments involving women are significant for effective training and development programs. In addition, infrastructure access along with awareness campaigns is required to empower across different aspects of life.
7	Pasha (2021)	The study aimed to analyze the impact of education on women empowerment who are struggling to contribute in the welfare and economic development of Pakistan. In addition the study objective is to	Micro data Analysis, Pakistan Social and Living Standards Survey from 2005 to 2014	The findings of the study indicated that, strong patriarchal structures in Pakistan increases empowerment when coupled with son preference and improved healthcare of boys. Education empowers women	It was recommended to introduce government interventions in reducing gender gap by investing in female's human capital to increase socioeconomic position in a society to meet and address country's challenges.

		provide clarification and define the concept of empowerment in the case of Pakistani society where women are limited in strong patriarchal structure, human rights violation, and cultural challenges.		in making decisions across marriages, resource allocation and family planning.	
8	Rotter (2019)	The study explored the causes and consequences of gender inequality in Pakistan. In addition along with a feminist and anthropological lens it aimed to examine the social, economic and politic struggles of women in the country.	Secondary study	The study concluded that, patriarchal structures are the main reason for gender inequality and gender-based violence.	The study suggested that to strengthen legal frameworks and ensure effective implementation this investing in law in training law enforcement personnel to handle gender-based violence in an effective manner. It was also recommended to empower women's voice and in organizations thus providing adequate funding and resources to support their efforts.
9	Pervaiz et al. (2011).	This paper aims to analyze the impact of gender inequality on economic growth of Pakistan.	The present study uses the time series data for the period of 1972-2009	The results reveal that labor force growth, investment and trade openness have statistically significant and positive impact whereas gender inequality has a significant and negative effect on economic growth of Pakistan.	On one hand, public policies should be formulated in a way which could enhance women's access to education, health and employment opportunities and on the other hand social mobilization is also needed.
10	Sarwar and Farid (2024)	This research study is an attempt to explicitly reveal and conceal the understanding of gender disparities and women's empowerment in Pakistan.	Qualitative interpretive research.	The findings underscore the need for multi-sectoral approaches to address the root causes of gender disparities and promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Pakistan.	This study recommends that there is a need to address socio cultural barriers, enhance women's political participation, empower women economically, promote education for girls, enhance healthcare services, and strengthen legal and policy frameworks to achieve SDG 5 in Pakistan.
11	Begum (2023)	This research aim to examine the significant factors of low female political participation in Pakistan.	Qualitative research method	It has been found that there are several factors, such as political, religious, economic, gender discrimination, ideological, and cultural, that restricts female participation in the political process.	Based on the findings and analyzing the selected studies, this study has recommended several aspects that are required to be considered by concerned authorities and relevant stakeholders.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of multiple studies highlight the ongoing difficulties women experience in achieving economic equality in the current SLR on the gender gap and women's economic involvement in Pakistan. The study outlines the necessity of conducting a critical assessment of

current policies and interventions aimed at mitigating gender disparities and advancing women's economic engagement in Pakistan. Moreover, it aims to recognize the principal factors that add to gender disparity and, furthermore, understand the difficulties obstructing women's economic commitment. In the end, giving suggestions to stakeholders, policymakers, and experts aimed at closing the gap by upgrading women's economic support in Pakistan. In this case, an empirical examination of women's status and socioeconomic well-being in Pakistan was led by Ashraf and Ali (2018), as they shed light on the complex elements that shape women's roles by giving an in-depth analysis of the factors affecting women's economic position in the country. Also, the study additionally gave significant knowledge into the opportunities and challenges that women in Pakistan's economy stand up to through looking at an extensive variety of socioeconomic variables. It outlined the interactions between societal norms, work, and education, which help us understand women's economic empowerment in the country in a deeper manner.

Moreover, the study by Rotter (2019) provided an in-depth analysis of gender inequality in Pakistan and also provided crucial information on the complex nature of this issue. The study provides knowledge of the historical, cultural, and social factors that help in maintaining gender inequality by emphasizing the feminist point of view. The mentioned study is also aligned with the current study objective of identifying the main reasons for the gender disparity in women's economic involvement in Pakistan. In addition, by breaking down how cultural practices and cultural shows affect gender dynamics in Pakistan, the anthropological perspective adds an unpretentious aspect to the discussion. Meanwhile, another study by Kanat et al. (2024) found that differences in resource proprietorship, formal business prospects, and access to financial services administrations continue to be a huge challenge despite general financial improvement. Such differences limit women's capacity to participate in the economy and gain anything from financial advancement, thus keeping up with gender inequality in the economy.

Furthermore, governments implemented measures aimed at providing women with more and more advanced economic empowerment to address the challenges. The main aim of such programmes, including female entrepreneurship and giving technical improvements, is to improve the ability and capacity of women and also open doors for financial independence. Additionally, the finding of the Jabeen et al. (2020) study suggested that these interventions should be altered for various settings, considering specific difficulties experienced by women in both urban and rural regions. To appropriately address their economic empowerment, women living in rural areas have various necessities and opportunities when contrasted with the urban women, thus indicating that particular solutions are needed. Similarly, studies led by Pasha (2021) and Khalid et al. (2020) gave further perspective on diminishing gender gaps in schooling, as it holds key importance when it comes to economic development. Also, their review stresses how significant training is for diminishing the hole in pay among both men and women. The positive relationship between women's educational achievement and household income well-being was particularly illustrated by Pasha (2019), suggesting that supporting women's education can improve household income results. It demonstrated that education can provide women with a distinct advantage in achieving financial equity by equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate more effectively in the economy.

Pakistan is positioned among the countries with the lowest levels of women's economic engagement and opportunities, highlighting a significant issue of gender inequality. Long-

standing cultural expectations and customs frequently define the roles of women, restricting their visibility in public and their job opportunities, which in turn perpetuates discriminatory behaviors. Pakistani women frequently do not have access to high-quality education, financial resources, and other instruments necessary for economic empowerment and decision-making involvement. Although the labor force participation rate has increased, women still work primarily in low-paying or unpaid agricultural jobs, and there are still sizeable gender wage discrepancies. However, women are frequently left out of political and economic decision-making groups, which makes it difficult for them to address problems like gender-based violence and childcare.

Currently, Pakistan stands as one of the lowest-ranking countries globally concerning gender equality, outpacing only Iraq, Yemen, and Afghanistan. As per the “Global Gender Gap Report 2021” released by the World Economic Forum (WEF), Pakistan was placed 153<sup>rd</sup> among 156 nations in the gender parity index. Sociocultural norms are deeply pervasive in Pakistani society and are the main cause of gender inequality. These challenges contribute to a significant gender disparity in the economy, which is evident in Pakistan's persistent low positions on international gender indices, especially in the areas of economic participation and opportunity.

Despite advancements in female participation in the labor force, many women remain engaged in unpaid agricultural labor or part-time employment, underscoring the necessity for thorough legal, policy, and social reforms to realize genuine economic empowerment. Consequently, these studies contend that gender disparities continue to occur due to a complicated interaction of economic, social, and cultural factors in Pakistan. These disparities are evident in various facets of women's lives, such as restricted access to economic opportunities, education, healthcare, and safeguards against gender-based violence. While some progress has been made in specific areas to address the gap between men and women, considerable challenges still exist.

The findings of Sarwar and Farid's (2024) study highlighted the necessity of multi-sectoral methods to address the underlying causes of gender inequality and advance women's empowerment and gender equality in Pakistan. Finding further suggested that the collaborative efforts between policymakers and feminist organizations can help in gender equality and create a more inclusive society for women in Pakistan. Further, the Javed et al. (2022) study points out the problems, including the orientation pay gap and women's limited financial opportunity. Such difficulties make it harder for women to turn out to be financially independent and engaged completely in the labor force and business. Women often work casually and for less pay in rural areas. Jabeen et al. (2020) brought a spotlight on how conventional economic activities highlight the confounded issues that women in Pakistan face, underlining the requirement for comprehensive approaches that tackle institutional alongside cultural challenges to gain significant progress toward economic empowerment and gender equality.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study aimed at investigating the gender gap and economic participation of women in Pakistan. Pakistani society is mainly focused on men, yet the patriarchal system does not exist everywhere in the country. The country is currently ranked among the worst countries all over the globe. There is a significant difference across each of the labor market indexes

regarding women's economic involvement in Pakistan. The female participation is significantly lower as compared to men in almost every industry of the country. It is due to numerous factors such as social and cultural norms, patriarchal mindsets, gender stereotypes, unequal economic opportunities and education, and marital status.

The study concluded that patriarchal society in Pakistan controls the lives of women, as women in such societies do not enjoy equal rights, and the absence of representation of women in Pakistan's economy highlights issues of gender equity and development. Most importantly, the majority of the women cannot contribute to the economy due to the housekeeping, as in several cities of the country childcare and cleaning responsibilities restrict women from functioning outside the home. In addition, a key problem was based on the orientation pay gap and women's limited financial opportunity.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, hopefully more effective policies and program can be introduced to empower women economically and socially. Thus, it would be more effective to educate women about their rights and responsibilities. It is recommended that the Pakistani government and private sectors organization focus on placing an emphasis on programs for female entrepreneurship, with a particular focus on technological and advanced levels of education for the women, thus increasing their chances and ability to become financially independent. It is also recommended to promote education, raise awareness, and invest in accessible education for every girl, as this will help them pursue diverse career paths and break the cycle of dependence. As this study is qualitative and limited to the analysis of past studies, reports about gender inequality in Pakistan, further study is necessary to identify the prevalence of the gender gap and economic inequality, while surveying a wider range of women, including those living in different geographic areas, would enhance the knowledge base.

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