

## Promotion of Women's Emancipation in Pakistan

**Ms. Sundas Malik**, *Pakistan Studies/Islamic Studies, Capital University of Science and Technology, Islamabad, Pakistan*

**Ms. Bareera Nazir**, *Pakistan Studies at National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan.*

Keywords	Abstract
Women, Empowerment, Pakistan, Women Issues, World's population, female	<i>When it comes to strength and power, women truly shine. More than half of the world's population is female. Despite making up the bulk of the population, women are often discriminated against because of their perceived emotional and physical fragility. Women's advancement and social standing benefit from our combined efforts to enhance their agency. Some misogynists have a skewed understanding of what is meant by "Women's Empowerment." While the goal is to help women feel more confident in themselves, have more control over their lives, and have a voice in shaping society, these males worry that this will threaten their position of dominance.</i>

### INTRODUCTION

Many women in impoverished countries and countries with low living standards have a hard time making ends meet. Women in Pakistan suffer a number of obstacles in the course of life. Due to differences in social and economic development, as well as the influence of tribal and primitive social formations, women's status varies greatly across socioeconomic groups, geographic regions, and the urban/rural gap. Women's illiteracy and lack of education make the problem much more severe in rural areas. In these societies, women are denied their fundamental freedoms and are expected to conform to harmful patriarchal norms. The following are just a few of the challenges that women confront today.

### WOMEN'S ISSUES

The patriarchal worldview is the fundamental reason for the gender gap. Patriarchy is the root cause of many problems that affect Pakistani women, including ridicule, assault, discriminatory policies, intimidation, incivility, exclusion, and others. One of the greatest obstacles to women's empowerment in Pakistan is the pervasiveness of discrimination based on gender at all levels of society, from the home to the government.

#### Illiteracy

Seventy percent of the population is located in rural areas, which have disproportionately less educational possibilities for girls. Girls can only attend elementary school, whereas boys can attend middle school or high school. Most parents do not put their daughters through school because they

see it as a waste of money and since the majority of the population is illiterate and conservative. That's why the gender gap in literacy rates is so concerning.

### **Poor Health Care Infrastructure**

Women in Pakistan experience worse health outcomes than men and children in general due to inadequate healthcare. Pregnant women in rural areas often experience the worst health outcomes because of a lack of access to hospitals and female medical professionals. Men in the family discourage female members from seeing male doctors, which often ends in tragedy. The sick women slowly bleed to death at the hands of their male family members' indifference. They are more prone to bouts of melancholy and nervousness.

### **Mal-Nutrition**

Inadequate diet is a major contributor to women's bad health. Experts say that more than 60% of Pakistani women are deficient in calcium and vitamin D. The lack of access to adequate nutrition causes the ladies to lose strength and look unhealthy. No one cares about them, even as their health declines.

### **Domestic Violence**

Physical, sexual, and psychological violence against women is widespread. In rural places, in particular, women are treated as though they are not even human. One-third of all women, or about 736 million, experience intimate partner abuse at some point in their lives. Perhaps under pressure from their families, women in these communities don't speak out for themselves or actively reject the status quo.

### **Honor Killing**

In the guise of honour, many rural women are being murdered by their fathers, brothers, or husbands. Karo Kari, which literally means "Black Black" and "Honor Killing" in English, is a common tradition in Sindh where a man can proclaim his sister, daughter, or wife as dishonorable and then choose to have her killed. A Karo (male) or Kari (female) who breaks this law is subject to the same punishment as a Karo (man). Mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters are used as bargaining chips to gain an advantage in conflict resolution among residents of these regions. Despite the passage of the Criminal Law Act 2016 (CLA 2016), women continue to make up the vast majority of honor killing victims.

### **Lack of Employment Opportunities**

Fewer employment opportunities are available to women than men. Their percentage of available positions is significantly lower than the percentage reserved for males. Male and female workers in industries, factories, and mills are paid different rates of pay. While women's labor is vital to the nation's economy, no concrete measures have been taken to ensure that they are protected.

## **Dependent on one's Financial Support System**

Unlike their male counterparts, Pakistani women do not typically provide for themselves financially. They have to rely on the men in their household for everything. This is just another reason why they are so defenseless. They are not afforded the same possibilities since they are unable to find suitable employment because of their lack of education. There are already more than 15 million female home-based workers in Pakistan, yet their wages are so low that they can hardly afford to eat. This leaves them with no choice but to rely on others to provide their basic needs and satisfy their wants.

## **Inheritance Issues**

Women are denied their rightful inheritance from their parents. The males do not think they are deserving of any of the family's land or property and they expect the women to keep quiet about wanting what rightfully belongs to them. Despite advancements made to improve women's status in society and the economy, the hard truth of women's inheritability is not changing.

## **Early Marriages**

One of the issues that women in Pakistan face is the prevalence of child and early marriage. The majority of parents believe it is pointless to spend money and time on their daughters' education. Without realizing it, they are preparing their girls to face the world on their own, whatever it brings, by giving them a solid foundation in education. Instead, they push their sisters and daughters into marriages they don't want them to be a part of, often leading to conflict at home. Typically, the bride's parents will borrow anything from \$500,000 to \$2,000,000 from the groom's family. The parents are comfortable with their daughter marrying an old, wealthy man even if they themselves do not make a lot of money. One of the factors contributing to the rise in divorce rates is the prevalence of marriages that take place at a young age.

## **Workplace Intimidation**

The issue of workplace intimidation is rarely brought up in discussions of women's empowerment in Pakistan. Using threats or other forms of coercion to induce sexual favour is an example of intimidation. Ugly and deplorable offers are made to them based on a quid pro quo tactic, in which they are asked to perform favours in exchange for higher positions or permanent employment. One of the major obstacles to women's empowerment in Pakistan is sexual exploitation, which persists despite the Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act of 2010 and Pakistan Penal Code Section 509.

## **ACTIONS TO PROMOTE THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN**

To truly empower women, we must take the necessary measures to increase their strength, autonomy, and self-assurance.

## **Education**

Learning is crucial to everyone's success in life. We shall not advance as a nation unless we achieve gender parity in all spheres of public life. Education disparities between the sexes have been an issue in Pakistan for a long time. Pakistan, the sixth most populated country in the world, has a problem with female illiteracy; more than 40% of women there have never attended school. Gaining knowledge and skills is crucial in promoting equality for women. In order to increase one's level of social consciousness, education is crucial. Many girls in Pakistan have the option to further their education by attending school or college, but they are unable to do so due to the pervasiveness of sexism in their society. While women are taught to be good homemakers, males are pushed to further their education and provide financially for the family. This is unacceptable in today's civilised society, when women deserve the same opportunities as men to advance their education and their careers.

*"Ilm Hasil Karna Har Ek Musalman (Mard Aur Aurat) par Farz Hai" is a hadees.*

*(Hadith #224 from Sunan Ibn Majah, Book 1)*

Schools in rural areas are typically located far from students' homes, making it difficult for them to commute there. Some people are allowed to go to such great lengths in order to further their education, whereas others are not. In our culture, there is a popular saying that encourages women to pursue higher education.

Some have stated that educating a man just benefits that guy, whereas educating a woman benefits a whole family. As a result, we can see how crucial it is for women to further their education, not just for their own sake but for the sake of their future children and grandchildren.

## **Right to Vote Freely**

Many regions of Pakistan do not allow women to vote because of cultural norms or the influence of older generations. However, in several Pakistani districts, female voters turned out in big numbers for the first time in more than 40 years. Pakistan passed a law in October guaranteeing voting rights for all citizens, including women. The right to vote is guaranteed by the Constitution, yet millions of women are denied that privilege due to agreements between political parties and the excuse of old customs used by older people. The government of Pakistan must do far more to ensure that women have equal access to voting opportunities. That voting rights would be extended to women in those communities and nations. Some locations or districts do not allow women to vote, and this is due in part to legal constraints, but also to a lack of education and information, and to male dominance. Women in less-developed parts of Pakistan, however, are not only restricted in their ability to vote, but also their freedom of speech. The first female Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto, is just one example of the rising number of women in political leadership positions.

## **Women Health**

When compared to other countries, women in Pakistan have the lowest health. The health of these populations must be prioritized, and they must be given more agency. Greater focus on reproduction should be a part of community-based family planning programs. Giving women the knowledge, they need to take care of their bodies and maintain a healthy diet. It is imperative that initiatives and campaigns geared toward women's health be initiated.

- Government support and a medical model that puts doctors in charge.
- The comfort and care of one's own family
- Taking care of oneself with regards to one's food and personal hygiene, etc. These are some of the most noteworthy contributors to women's advancement in the medical field.

## **Rights to Inherit**

Women's rights are increasingly being prioritised by legal aid campaigns and organisations. To help you claim your inheritance legally, lawyers will fill up your birth or marriage records. Prenuptial agreements are not just advised for men, but also for women. These efforts aim to not only raise awareness, but also give women the confidence they need to sign up. Men and their families would be foolish to ignore the dire consequences of ignoring women's inheritance rights. Women are an integral element of our society and make significant contributions to our daily lives. They shouldn't be treated like slaves and granted the same rights as everyone else. They deserve to be accorded the same respect and basic rights as men do in our society. Inheritance rights in Islam are equally extended to males and women. The Holy Quran states that "from what is left by parents and those nearest related there is a share for males and a share for women, whether the property is modest or large, a determined share," regardless of the size of the estate.

## **Monetary Autonomy**

Empowering women is crucial because of the vital role they play in nation formation. Better job chances and platforms, as well as the kind of atmosphere that supports them so that they may work courageously, freely, and do better things to become independent and meet their needs, would help boost the economy and make them self-sufficient. It's important to give them a space where they can feel comfortable expressing themselves freely. The empowerment and education opportunities that come with economic growth are a boon to women everywhere. There is a correlation between women's empowerment and economic expansion. Health, education, reproductive rights, political engagement, and other forms of female autonomy are all supported by developing-world organizations.

## **Expanded Opportunities for Employment**

Cultural factors, discrimination in the labor market, and work in the unorganized sector are commonly cited as reasons for women's poor visibility in Pakistan's job sector. Despite being less productive, having more unstable income, and juggling more responsibilities at home and in the workplace, women are overrepresented in industries with a poor reputation for job stability. Women make up a minority of the workforce in the organized service sector, which consists mostly

of government services. Both rural and urban areas have a greater rate of female unemployment because of gender stereotypes and the fact that women tend to have lower levels of education than males. Increases in women's education led to greater numbers of women working in professional and managerial capacities across all industries. To elevate women's position in Sindh's society, the government, NGOs, and forward-thinking political parties must prioritize their education. Programs that provide women with education and skills are crucial to achieving gender parity in Sindh. The goal of these initiatives is to provide females with the education and training they need to enter the labor force and raise their economic standing. Breaking the cycle of poverty and giving women the agency to make positive choices in their life are both facilitated by access to quality education. Vocational training programs can also provide women with the knowledge and abilities they need to pursue non-traditional areas, thereby expanding their job and financial options. Schools, community centers, and technical colleges are all viable venues for the delivery of such courses. Such initiatives include, but are not limited to, teaching adults a new language, providing vocational education, and awarding college scholarships. Research shows that these courses boost women's reading, numeracy, and decision-making skills, and raise their likelihood of entering the workforce. But there are still obstacles that must be overcome, such as a dearth of educational and training opportunities, scarce funds, and cultural aversion to women's education and workforce engagement. Microfinancing and other banking services can give women the financial stability they need to launch or grow their own small companies, thereby boosting their economic independence. Female residents of Sindh, especially those living in rural regions, face significant barriers when trying to gain access to healthcare and banking services. It's possible that many women can't afford even the most basic medical treatments because they lack access to healthcare. Women's access to healthcare services may also be constrained by cultural and societal conventions, such as restrictions on women leaving the house or a lack of financial resources to pay for medical care. The history of Sindh is replete with examples of strong, independent women who have built their communities and brought honor to their country. One such woman is Benazir Bhutto, the first female prime leader of Pakistan, who works just as hard as men. And there are plenty of women there who don't teach or practice medicine but instead work in the national assembly or one of the many other national or international agencies.

## **The Right to Free Speech**

People should be able to speak their minds without being stifled by the government or worried about repercussions. This privilege, however, is not always extended to all members of society, and women in particular are often denied this right. When it comes to public discourse, women in particular cultures may be subject to bias and censorship. The ability to openly express oneself may be further hampered for Sindhi women due to cultural and societal norms. These include ethnic discrimination, limited access to education, and pressure to conform to traditional gender norms and expectations. It's worth noting that women's ability to express themselves freely may be impacted by their socioeconomic status and cultural norms. It is critical to encourage and support women's right to free expression and to give them a platform from which to make their voices heard. In Pakistan, the right to free expression is guaranteed by the country's constitution as a basic guarantee of human dignity. However, women in Pakistan face significant barriers while attempting to actualize this right due to cultural and societal norms and expectations.

Women in Pakistan face strong social pressure to play it safe and refrain from public displays of dissent in order to maintain their "traditional" gender roles. Especially in public and political life, this can make women feel silenced and isolated. In addition, women who speak up or disagree are sometimes met with hostility and abuse, both online and off.

Though they face obstacles, many Pakistani women are striving to use their constitutionally protected right to free expression. There is an effort by activists and civil society organizations to educate people about the value of women's free expression and to equip women with the means they need to exercise that right in a secure and confident manner.

Women in Struggle for Empowerment (WISE) is a feminist organization in Pakistan that advocates for women's rights and democratic reform. Through education and training, they help women gain the confidence they need to become political activists and to push for laws that advance women's rights and equality.

The media also plays a significant role in advancing women's rights to free expression in Pakistan. Journalists and media outlets are making strides to ensure that women's views are heard and that the obstacles women experience when exercising their First Amendment right to free expression are brought to the public's attention.

Freedom of expression is a basic human right that must be preserved for all individuals, including women in Pakistan, despite the limitations that exist. Women in Pakistan are unable to have their voices heard due to societal norms, but by banding together and supporting one another, they can break down these barriers.

In conclusion, the freedom of expression is a basic human right, but it is often curtailed for women in Pakistan due to cultural and social norms and expectations. Women are being encouraged by activists, civil society organizations, and the media to exercise their First Amendment rights. Remember that the ability to free expression is a vital human right that must be safeguarded for everyone, including women in Pakistan.

## **STATUS AND REGULATIONS OF PAKISTAN**

The Women's Protection Act is a piece of legislation that guarantees victims of domestic violence, sexual harassment, and other forms of abuse the right to seek legal recourse. In addition, it sets up a network of shelters and protective orders for battered women.

**The Women in Distress and Detention Fund:** If you are a woman in need of financial assistance, you may be eligible for help from the Women in Distress and Detention Fund. This fund helps women who are in dire situations or who have been detained, such as those who have experienced domestic violence or who have been wrongfully accused of a crime.

**The Zina Ordinance:** Through this ordinance imposes harsh penalties for those convicted of engaging in sexual activity outside of marriage or before marriage. Women who have been victims of rape or other forms of sexual assault have been criticised for being punished under this statute.

**The National Commission on the Status of Women:** According to the National Commission on the Status of Women: It is the job of this commission to advance equality for women and check that domestic policies are in line with global human rights norms. The commission also helps and supports women who have experienced discrimination or assault.

**The National Action Plan on Women's Empowerment:** A Roadmap for Women's Economic Independence in the United States: In order to achieve its goal of empowering women, this plan will work to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, increase their representation in government, and protect their civil and human rights. The plan's goals include empowering women by encouraging their participation in politics and decision-making, as well as expanding their access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

## **THE IMPACT OF THE MEDIA ON EMPOWERING WOMEN**

There's an old adage that goes something like, "There's a woman behind every successful man." Today's empowered woman is crucial not just to the prosperity of her household but also to the prosperity of her country. Women have crucial roles in the progress and prosperity of any civilization. As a result, individuals need to be provided with venues where they can showcase their skills and earn a living wage. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, this is not the norm. Women are increasingly using social media as a forum for voicing their ideas and showcasing their talents. When it comes to online commerce, online teaching, online education, and even playing games at international or national levels, women are now able to speak up and represent their families and countries on a global stage where there is no male domination. Because of the rise of social media, women today have more opportunities than ever to start their own businesses from the convenience of their own homes, where they can also care for their family. Women who wish to succeed in life are often drawn to the possibility of working from home while yet serving a sizable clientele. Women are increasingly taking the reins of business-focused communities and pages on the web.

### **Support women-run businesses**

Many women have taken the reins and launched their own enterprises recently, especially in the wake of the pandemic. They're building their independence through the success of their firms. One way to help women gain independence is to invest in their enterprises. Investing in women-owned businesses, sharing information about them on social media, patronizing stores managed by women, recognizing and celebrating their achievements, and donating to their causes are just a few of the numerous ways we can help them succeed. If we put in this much effort, we can empower the women of our society to be successful and self-sufficient.

### **Mentor other women**

The more we teach one another, the more we learn ourselves. If you're in a position to support other women who are also interested in starting their own business but are feeling overwhelmed or confused, you should do so. It could inspire someone to take the plunge into entrepreneurship.



## **Investigations and protection**

It is imperative that our government and society place a premium on the safety and well-being of its female citizens. There have been much anti-violence, anti-harassment, and anti-honor killing legislation passed, but they are largely ineffective since they are not enforced. We need to take action to ensure that laws are actually enforced, and we need to provide our women the tools they need to become effective advocates for social change. Women, Peace, and Security is one group that actively advocates for women's rights (WPS). This is more of an informal push to get more women involved in politics than a formal initiative. Essentials for better safeguarding women and girls during and after war are laid out in the women, peace, and security agenda. For women in Pakistan to be safe from all forms of abuse, the country's anti-violence and anti-harassment legislation must be strictly enforced.

## **Feminist movement and aurat march**

The Aurat march is a social movement occurring in several parts of Pakistan. The narratives and perspectives on feminism and women's empowerment have been significantly shifted thanks to this movement. In a patriarchal culture, new ideas and perspectives were formed to advance women's social, political, and legal standing. Despite being a demonstration of women's empowerment in Pakistan, this march has been portrayed in the media and by some in the Pakistani government exclusively in negative and contentious terms.

## **History of transformation and empowerment of women**

Preceding Pakistan's independence, women faced decades of struggle. Once women gained their freedom, they were able to organize women's voluntary service (WVS), which helped alleviate their health and economic concerns. The All-Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) was established to advance the status of women in Pakistan via advocacy for economic and educational opportunities. The rights of married Muslim women are codified in a new law. To this day, women still face significant barriers to equality, but much progress has been accomplished.

Every year on International Women's Day, women all around Pakistan gather for a protest march called the Aurat. The goal of the Aurat March and the Movement for Women's Basic Rights is to give women equal power in all spheres of society. As a means of eradicating prejudice based on gender and empowering women in all spheres of society. Since it diverges from the original women's liberation movement, it has been challenged and is entering a new phase. An increasing number of feminists are reclaiming feminism from the context of Islam and other religious universes rich with symbolism. They provide a threat to the status quo by blurring the lines between public and private spaces. Therefore, it is no longer the same as the earlier women's rights movement that sought to empower women by ignoring criticism.

## **The adverse effects of aurat march**

In recent years, events called "AURAT MARCH" have been held across Pakistan on March 8th. Instead than empowering women, this march was organized by the ruling class as a protest against the men in society, which has led to widespread backlash from the general public. This

march has turned into a campaign against men rather than a celebration of women's empowerment and advancement. Women's empowerment has nothing to do with slogans like "Mera jism mere marzi" or "apna khana khud garam kro." Many Pakistanis' sensibilities are roused since their demands and slogans run counter to the country's established religious standards and customs.

### **How men can help emancipate females**

In order to achieve gender equality and support measures for women's empowerment, males must take the lead. For women to have equal opportunities in the workplace, responsibility over their own finances, and a voice in policymaking, male allies may be powerful examples. The United Nations' HEFORSHE campaign is a great illustration of the power of united action between the sexes. In order to support their female counterparts, men can pitch in with housework and other childrearing duties.

- By allowing them to develop and prosper in a variety of ways
- By believing in them, showing them trust, and showing them that you appreciate the decisions they make.

### **THE ADVANTAGES OF EMPOWERING WOMEN**

The economic, political, and social well-being of nations, neighborhoods, and families all depend on the advancement of women. Women's full potential is realized when they are free from fear, can pursue their passions, and are supported by a community that encourages and enables them to do so. When this happens, they are better able to contribute their talents to the economy, which in turn helps the country and the world thrive.

### **CONCLUSION**

Any kind of discrimination against women is bad for society. There is a halt to development and advancement. Women's empowerment is essential to national and social development. Women have more strength and resilience than we give them credit for, and they can hold their own against the worst of society. That they even exist, let alone have an opinion worth considering, merits our utmost regard.

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