



RESEARCH PAPER

Gender Inequality in Pakistan: An Assessment

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ABSTRACT

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The gender analysis reveals the widening discrepancy between men and women in a number of sectors, as well as the difficulties Pakistan confronts in addressing these issues. There are only a few data points available on gender gaps in specific areas like educational success, health, and political engagement that could be used to help us reach this goal. A lack of resources and opportunities, as well as a scarcity of knowledge and information, exacerbate the gender gap. In terms of political engagement, educational attainment, and economic production, the study looks at Pakistan's gender disparities. We gathered data from a range of government, foreign development, and local non-governmental organizations for this study. Based on the findings of a gender assessment, a variety of techniques and policies can be implemented to address gender issues. Government education spending should prioritize gender equality while identifying places where there is a greater gender divide. Increased government spending on education and political engagement will have a huge positive impact on rural women.

Introduction

In our world, men and women have equal rights, opportunities, and responsibilities. Pakistan has the highest level of gender inequality in the world, which is visible in every aspect of life. On the 2017 Gender Inequality Index, Pakistan is placed 133rd out of 160 nations, with a GII value of 0.541, indicating that Pakistan has the world's highest level of gender inequality (UNDP, 2018). Although boys get the bulk of household health and education resources, there are substantial gender discrepancies at the home, market, and institutional levels. Women in Pakistan confront a shortage of employment options, particularly in the informal sector², due to poor school enrolment and literacy rates. When women's health is ignored, their death and life expectancy rates are greater. (Moheyuddin, Ghulam, 2005). All of society's traditions practices and cultural standards contribute to the discrepancies between men and women. Lack of resources, bad health, and illiteracy all affect women's quality of life, contributing to economic stagnation (Moheyuddin, Ghulam, 2005).

Men and women differ significantly in a range of categories, including education, work, and health, according to Pakistan's gender assessment. Because current data only show gender inequality in a few particular categories, such as education, health, politics, and labour force participation, achieving this goal will necessitate a thorough investigation of both economic and non-economic issues. Due to a lack of resources and opportunities, movement constraints, a lack of education, and a lack of information, women may face various gender disadvantages (Murad, Ahmad Raza & Hasan Sohaib, 2010). As a result of social and cultural restraints, women face greater challenges in getting these resources, which must be overcome by coordinated efforts (Bari, 2000). Gender equality calls for a long-term cultural transition, which can be achieved through education and increased awareness. As society's opinion of women shifts, so will women's role in society. Gender-blind policies are tolerated by women, notwithstanding their limited impact on macroeconomics and social policy (Bari, 2000). Is a patriarchal society and political framework the cause of gender inequality? Women's exclusion from decision-making processes also limits their ability to speak up or express an opinion on municipal, regional, and national governance. In comparison to other South Asian countries, Pakistan has a larger proportion of female politicians⁴. Pakistani society is completely male-dominated and regimented, with men and women playing defined roles. (Bari, 2000). In health care, education, and home decision-making, women's limited mobility and economic dependency play a role. Females are more likely to engage in home-based economic activities to generate money in the informal sector since they are seen as a source of pride for men.

Women will be able to recognise their fundamental rights and the vital role they play in society and the economy as a result of gender equality. Women's participation in decision-making will have a positive impact on their lives as well as on society as a whole. Women can contribute to the well-being of their families if they are allowed to participate in economic endeavors. Females in Pakistan, particularly in rural regions, are discouraged from pursuing higher education by their families. As a result of their high school graduation, their enrolment rate lowers. Women's life expectancy increased from 65 to 67 years after the birth of their first child. While the non-agricultural industry employs 14.5 percent of women on average, the agriculture sector employs 73.2 percent of women, which is exceptionally high. Until 2017, women accounted for 20% of the legislature, according to sources.

A new emphasis on gender studies has emerged in the social sciences. The impact of feminist theory on our understanding of how men and women are perceived, treated, and treated differently in society has been enormous (World Bank, 2005; Anaya Roy, 2003). Uneven power distribution between men and women is a global social issue, albeit it is characterized differently depending on the context (Nelson, Robert L., 1999). Gender inequality is visible even in developed industrial countries, where female participation is lower and male unemployment is higher (Rives : Janet M : Yousefi, Mahmood, 1997).

Literature Review

Given the widespread occurrence of gender-based violence in everyday life, providing empirical and theoretical grounds for GBV in catastrophes is crucial. Women are more vulnerable to disasters than men around the world (Samir Dasgupta; Ismail Siriner; Partha Sarathi De, 2010; Eric Neumayer & Thomas Plümper, 2007; Brenda D. Phillips; Deborah S.K. Thomas; Alice Fothergill; Lynn Blinn-Pike,

2009), and women in developing countries die from disasters at a higher rate than men (Domeisen, 1998; Eric Neumayer & Thomas Plümper). There has been a recurring pattern in the number of people killed or injured in natural disasters, such as tsunamis, earthquakes, and hurricanes, since the early twenty-first century (Deborah S.K. Thomas; Brenda D. Phillips; Alice Fothergill; Lynn Blinn-Pike, 2010). As a result, in most locations, women are more responsible for child care than men and are more likely to work from home than men.

Natural disasters obstruct pregnant and postpartum women's ability to migrate. Women are more vulnerable to disasters than men since they live longer than males. As a result, women are more likely than men to be the victims of gender-based violence (Henrici, J. M; Helmuth, A. S; & Braun, J., 2010). During times of hardship, women are taught to prioritize their own needs, even if it means being abused by men. (Parkinson, D., 2017). "Essentialist conceptions about gender identity, the division labor, and masculine power and authority were not questioned but were protected," according to Enarson and Scanlon (1999, p. 118). This is what happens with disasters, and it is accentuated. Terry and Thomas (1997) think that all members of society, regardless of gender, should have equal access to higher education possibilities.

Gender Inequality and Economic Growth

Gender inequality has been the subject of numerous research to establish the causes, repercussions, and impacts. Theoretical and empirical causes of economic growth are of interest to a large number of economists. Endogenous growth (growth that is not constrained by diminishing capital returns) is favoured by some theories (Roemer, 1986; R. Lucas, 1988; Chen, Been-Lon, 1997). Unlike Solow's (1956) model, which includes exogenous savings and population increase, this model combines a neoclassical production function with exogenous savings and population growth to show per capita income convergence. Solow's paradigm is diametrically opposite to these two models (R. Solow, 1956). A variety of growth models emphasize human capital. The basic Solow model can still produce conditional convergence when human capital is factored in. It can be used in endogenous models as well. According to a recent study, the reverse is true (Klasen, Stephan, 2008).

Gender gaps in schooling have been linked to lower economic growth in a number of recent studies. Gender inequality has been proven to have a negative impact on economic growth in a number of theoretical contributions. Due to the effect of female education on fertility and the development of human capital for the next generation, the research implies that eliminating the gender disparity will result in economic growth. These impacts have also been studied empirically. In contrast to prior research that claimed that gender disparities in education could boost economic growth, it appears that the opposite is true.

Gender Assessment in Education

As a result of the country's social, cultural, demographic, and economic challenges, Pakistan continues to have a gender education gap. Women confront prejudice in practically every aspect of life in Pakistani society, which is patriarchal. Gender disparities in education can be measured in a number of ways. When income quartiles are taken into account, gender inequalities in gross and net enrolment rates are obvious. Gender gaps in educational attainment can also be identified using

graduation and dropout rates. In other words, men presently outnumber women in terms of basic and secondary school attendance and literacy rates, according to the Pakistan Economic Survey. Pakistan has made little headway in bridging the educational gender gap. According to a 2005 education census, there were 2, 27,791 educational institutions in the country, with 25% dedicated to male students, 21% to female students, and 53% coed. The highest levels of total involvement are in the Northwest Frontier Province, Punjab, Sindh, and Northwest Frontier Province, while the lowest are in Baluchistan. The FATA region of Pakistan has the lowest percentage of female enrolment, while the Northern Areas and AJK have enrollment rates that are approximately comparable.

Both boys and females have equal access to schooling. Discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or gender is prohibited. Article 25A of Pakistan's constitution mandates that all citizens, regardless of gender, receive free and compulsory education. Educational inequality is at the root of a slew of other socioeconomic issues. This is especially true for girls, who face a higher rate of gender discrimination in schools than their urban counterparts, due to impoverished families' lack of financial resources to provide a better education for their children. A paucity of female teachers in rural areas, a lack of vital school infrastructures like water, power, a boundary wall, and political activity in rural communities are all factors that contribute to the low percentage of female pupils in schools. A lack of public money is another key impediment to educational growth.

The educational system in Baluchistan is less developed than in Punjab, making it more difficult for girls to avoid going to school¹⁴. In both rural and urban areas, female attendance in public schools is mostly a result of these institutions' poor conditions, which include antiquated structures, a scarcity of educated teachers, and a low level of education. Separation based on race, class, and socioeconomic standing is another factor that contributes to the widening of social divides in our educational system.

Table 1
Education Inequality by Gender

	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
2017	81	65	78	64	55	46	88	78	2119247	3204934
2016	81	66.9	77	65	55	46	87	77	1861199	3040280
2015	80.2	66.79	77.82	65.34	54.99	45.67	87	77	220955	3309514
2014	79.6	64.9	79.9	66.93	52.7	42.5	82	80	231176	3300032
2013	79.4	63.4	79	67	49.63	40.04	79	75	2402152	3142637
2012	80	64	77	66	49.52	36.81	80	80	2319405	3051023
2011	78	63	73	60	46.78	36.92	75	75	2328472	3151071
2010	80	62	73	60	46.49	36.81	77	77	2106197	3047137
2009	79	61	68	55	46.83	36.32	76	74	2415168	3313598
2008	79	61	67	54	45.4	36.83	76	73	2660644	3621637
2007	-	-	67	54	42.56	35.8	76	78	2798690	3821769
2006	79	58	68	52	40.21	31.34	79	77	3264260	4935948
2005	77	53	71	51	39.23	28.48	71	74	2833036	4331012
2004	-	-	-	-	38.93	27.53	70	72	2888863	4622881
2003	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3404193	5045717

Source: World Bank Indicators

The results of this table and its discussion are present in the section of Results and Discussion of this research article.

Gender Assessment in Political Participation

As a result of the Local Governor Ordinance of 2001, women now have more opportunities to engage in the country's political process. Nearly 36,000 women voted in the 2001 election, the majority of them had no prior experience in government. They were both unsure of their fundamental rights, obligations, and responsibilities. Women, on the other hand, must be included in politics if they are to have a voice. The National Assembly has 342 members, 60 of whom are women and ten of whom are non-Muslims, according to Article 51. Seats are also distributed depending on population across states, federally administered tribal areas (FATA), and the nation's capital. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has Pakistan rated 100th, ahead of countries like India. According to Article 50 of the 1973 Constitution, Pakistan's Parliament is bicameral. The National Assembly and the Senate, as well as a President, make up the government.

Following modifications to the constitution and the Proclamation of Local Government Ordinance, 2000, the Pakistani government ensured that a minimum of 33 percent of local government seats were reserved for women. Female legislators presently hold 128 seats in provincial legislatures and 17% of National Assembly seats. Women have been allotted 60 seats in the National Assembly, accounting for 17% of total seats, according to the latest recent figures. Punjab has 35 female seats out of a total of 148 in Pakistan's most populated province.

Table 2
Female Participation in National Assembly of Pakistan (2019)

Characteristics	Punjab	Sindh	KPK	Balochistan	Federal capital	Total
General	141	61	45	16	3	266
Women representation	32	14	10	4	0	60
Total	176	75	55	20	3	276
Percentage Women	18.1	18.6	18.1	20.0	0	22.5

Material and Methods

Secondary sources and publicly available data are used in this investigation. Secondary data is data obtained from original sources and made available to academics for use in their own study. To put it another way, this is data that has already been collected. You may have obtained data for one reason as a researcher and then shared it with another to perform another study. Data that has been reused is referred to as secondary data in the original study and main data in the follow-up study. Publications such as books, journals, newspapers, and websites, as well as other publicly available documents, will be used as secondary data sources in 2021 (Formplus, 2021). Secondary qualitative data analysis is used to answer questions about the research that were not addressed in the initial study (Hinds et, 1997). Making primary datasets available for secondary study on their own can be advantageous for new researchers. Qualitative researchers examine data to gain a more comprehensive picture of a phenomenon.

The study looks into the inequalities between men and women in terms of political activity and health in Pakistan. The study incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data from government, international development, and local non-profit organization publications. This examination clarifies gender roles, relationships, and resource control between the sexes in order to fully exploit the potential and restrictions of economic and human advancement.

Results and Discussions

Table 1 depicts the gender difference in Pakistani education from 2003 to 2017. Male literacy stands at 81 percent, compared to 66 percent for females, despite the fact that the young adult literacy rate (15-24) has increased over time. The ratio of primary and secondary problems in boys and females follows a similar trend. Both ratios have improved in recent years, but the Secondary Completion Rate for both genders has to be improved urgently. In 2017, 55 percent of males and less than half of girls had completed secondary education. Males are more likely than females to make the transition from primary to secondary education. At least 88 percent of boys and 78 percent of girls completed the transition from elementary to secondary general education in 2016. Males, on the other hand, saw a 5% increase in their rate of transition between 2004 and 2017, while females saw a 5% increase. Nonetheless, the proportion of children over the age of six who did not complete primary school decreased for both genders between 2004 and 2017. At least 50 million girls and 34 million boys were unable to attend school in 2003; however, these figures began to fall after that. Despite the fact that 32 million girls and 21 million boys did not attend school in 2017, the gender gap in those who did not attend school is larger than the gap in those who did not attend school among men, needing further attention. According to the Global Campaign for Education, 5.1 million primary school children, 63% of whom are female, do not go to school (2014). This country has the world's third-highest school absence percentage among school-aged youngsters. In addition, due to gender gaps in educational attainment, Pakistan is ranked 147th out of 189 countries on the Gender Inequality Index.

Table 3 of the Gender Parity Index (GPI) shows this educational disparity (see below). According to GPI data from 2003, the GPI value was 0.77, but by 2016 it had risen to 0.81. The gender gap, though, is still less than one. According to women's and children's rights treaties, 77 million youngsters, 56 percent of whom are females, are unable to exercise their fundamental educational rights (CRC). Women in Pakistan face more bias in education than men, as these figures show. Poverty, cultural norms, travel restrictions, a lack of educational facilities, a shortage of female educators, and inadequate government support for education are just a few of the obstacles women encounter on their path to a better future.

Table 3
Gender Parity Index of Pakistan (GPI)

Years	Gross Enrolment ratio (GPI)	Gross Enrolment	Gross Enrolment
	Pri & Sec	Primary	Secondary
2017	0.84	0.86	0.811
2016	0.83	0.85	0.81
2015	0.83	0.854	0.79
2014	0.82	0.851	0.79
2013	0.81	0.86	0.73
2012	0.82	0.86	0.73

2011	0.83	0.852	0.75
2010	0.84	0.85	0.77
2009	0.83	0.85	0.79
2008	0.81	0.84	0.75
2007	0.8	0.83	0.75
2006	0.78	0.79	0.77
2005	0.77	0.76	
2004		0.73	
2003		0.72	

If <1 then disparity in favour of male

If >1 then disparity in favour of female

From 1999-2000 to 2015-16, additional indices of educational gender imbalance, such as the number of schools, students, instructors, and student-teacher ratios, are included below. In 1999-2000, female students occupied nearly half of all elementary schools (58 percent of total enrolment), nearly all middle schools (8.1 percent), and nearly all high schools (98 percent) (4.6 percent). As a result, while the total number of primary, middle and high schools decreased, the total number of female schools increased across the board, with 60.1, 21.3, and 13.8 thousand female schools in primary, middle, and high schools, respectively. In every category, male and female enrolment has gradually climbed over the last fifteen years. There is, however, a large gender gap. Males made up 70.4 percent of primary, 161.5 percent of the middle, and 141.8 percent of secondary school enrolments in 1990-00, while females made up 52.2 percent of high school enrolments.

Having said that, we are starting to see a rise in political engagement. Table 4 represents the distribution of National Assembly seats in Pakistan in 2019 based on the most recent information available on the National Assembly's website. The seating arrangement may be changed from its initial form if no oath is taken or if seats remain vacant. The National Assembly has a 22.5 percent female presence, but Punjab has a higher female representation than the other provinces.

Table 4
Number of Elected Members to the National Assembly by Gender from 1990 -to 2013

Election Years	Total	Female n	%	Male n	%
1990	217	2	0.9	215	99.1
1993	217	4	1.8	213	98.2
1997	217	6	2.8	211	97.2
2002	342	73	21	269	79
2008	342	76	22.2	263	76.9
2013	342	68	19.88	274	80.12
2018	272	60	22.5	212	76.8

Source: National Assembly Secretariat, Islamabad

Female representation in the National Assembly is extremely low, both among Muslim and non-Muslim members. In 1990, there were 215 male members and 2 female members in the National Assembly, a male-to-female ratio of less than 0.9 percent. Between 1993 and 1997, however, the number progressively increased. During the general elections of 1988, 1990, and 2007, female-only seats were

eliminated. The number of female seats in the National Assembly and Senate was drastically increased in 2002, to a total of 22. According to the Senate of Pakistan's website, women held 16.346 percent of Senate seats in 2018, but the Constitution of the Eighteenth Amendment Act, 2010, added four seats for non-Muslim senators. Only one female senator served in the United States Senate in 1990, which was considered extremely unusual at the time. There were 17 women on the board by 1993. Female representation in the representative body has also been raised. Women made up 20% of the Senate's 104 members in 2018. Pakistan has an increasing number of women participating in the political process as voters, candidates, or political activists compared to other countries, including the most democratic. Women should have more opportunities to hold national leadership positions so that they may push for policies that benefit women from all walks of life.

Conclusion

This study examines gender inequality in Pakistan, focusing on variations in educational achievement and political involvement among women. Gender discrepancies have been observed more frequently in females than in males, implying that female positions are not regarded as equal to male positions. As a result, economic development will not be able to realize its full potential unless gender is taken into account. Men's and women's gender roles differ substantially depending on socioeconomic and cultural factors. Patriarchal ideas have also shaped women's responsibilities in society. As a result of traditional social standards that artificially segregate production and reproduction, women have been relegated to the reproductive roles of mothers and spouses. According to figures from both government and non-government sources, Pakistan's gender gap is showing a mixed trend. The results of a gender assessment can be used in strategic planning, policy creation, or mission formulation to counteract gender inequity. Equal access to education, political participation, and economic engagement for men and women is required, as well as equal decision-making authority for women.

Female senior management representation, on the other hand, is extremely low, owing to the female workforce's lack of education and competencies. When it comes to female managers, Pakistan is ranked 108th in the globe (ILO, 2015). To begin, reducing the income disparity between men and women will necessitate increasing women's educational opportunities. Women's education can be used to expand women's employment opportunities in the formal sector, hence reducing gender inequality. To eliminate gender stereotypes, the federal and provincial governments should prioritize female education.

Recommendations

- Improved financial infrastructure and access to interest-free loans are essential for women entrepreneurs and students to be economically empowered.
- It is vital to educate women about their civic rights in order to inspire more women to enter politics. To elect leaders who will seek to improve women's lives in the future, the government should raise awareness of the fact that all women have the right to vote, particularly in rural areas. Pakistan has enacted legislation and implemented programs to promote women's rights and gender equality. National plans of action and the National Policy for Women's

Development and Empowerment both have the goal of empowering women and ensuring equal access to all services (2002, respectively).

- The federal and provincial governments' 2005 Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP) displays their commitment to reducing gender inequity. Political engagement, institutional restructuring, public sector employment, policy, budgeting, and public expenditure procedures, as well as capacity-building initiatives, are all mandated by GRAP, with a special emphasis on gender mainstreaming.

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