

Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 in Punjab: Measurement, Obstacles and Strategies to Overcome the Challenges

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Abstract - This research explores the relationship between social media use for health information and self-medication practices among youth and focuses on the mediating role of knowledge of medicines. By adopting cognitive dissonance theory, specifically this research aims to understand how the extent to which conflicting information from social media influences youth's beliefs and behaviors regarding self-medication practices. An empirical study was conducted using an online survey method to collect data from 330 students representing youth at the University of Management and Technology Lahore, Pakistan. The descriptive analyses were performed using SPSS, while the effects were examined by Smart PLS software. The statistical results of direct effects show that social media use for health-related information significantly affects self-medication practice and knowledge of medicine risks. However, knowledge of medicine risks does not affect self-medication practices. The indirect effect results indicate that the relationship between variables is not statistically significant. This study concluded that increased use of social media among youth is associated with greater knowledge of medicine and more self-medication practices. However, knowledge of medicine risks does not impact their self-medication practices because the degree of dissonance (importance and ratio) is low regarding knowledge of medicine risks compared to self-medication practices, indicating no inconsistency between their beliefs and behaviors. The research also provided valuable recommendations for health policymakers, media health communicators, and social media users to address self-medication practices.

Keywords - Gender Equality, Women Empowerment, SDG's 5, GEM, Punjab



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1. Introduction

Sustainable Development Goal 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, recognizing that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but an essential underpinning for a peaceful, flourishing, and sustainable world. SDG 5 holds specific significance in the context of Pakistan due to the insistent gender disparities that exist in almost all significant sectors, including education, economy, and politics.

Despite constitutional guarantees of equal fundamental rights, Pakistani women lag far behind men and face numerous challenges, such as limited access to education and healthcare facilities, gender-based violence, financial dependency, restricted movement, and underrepresentation in decision-making roles.¹ The fact cannot be denied that accomplishing SDG 5 in Pakistan is decisive for the country's inclusive development, as gender equality is intrinsically associated with economic growth, social integrity, political stability, and particularly the well-being of women. Research indicates that reducing the gender gap in Pakistan could intensify the country's GDP by 30% by 2025. The figures highlight the economic imperative of gender equality.² Studies also indicate that in Pakistan, women's empowerment would lead to upgraded health outcomes and poverty rates. That would ultimately lead to the development of resilience in the communities. The accomplishment of SDG 5 will progress a critical pathway to sustainable development in the country.³

Punjab is the most populated province of Pakistan. It is considered the most progressive and enlightened region of the state compared to the rest of the provinces. Here, women are quite liberal, educated, aware, and knowledgeable about their rights, predominantly in urban areas. Still, a vast disparity exists in terms of gender equality and women empowerment.

The measurement of gender equality in Punjab is primarily assessed using frameworks such as the Gender Equality Measure (GEM) and the Gender Development Index (GDI). The Global Gender Gap Report (2023) published by the World Economic Forum documented that while incremental progress is observed in educational and health sectors for women in Punjab, substantial disparities persist, particularly in economic participation and political empowerment. The Findings from the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) surveys documented the persistent gaps in the mentioned domains.⁴ The Punjab Human Development Report (2017) further supports these observations. It highlights the fact that women, here face extensive economic and social barriers,⁵ that eventually prevent them from accessing resources and opportunities like the opposite gender, and thus, gender equality seems like a distant dream in the province.

The Government of Punjab recognizes the significance of aligning provincial development plans with global targets to ensure sustainable growth and social equity. In this context, it has taken noteworthy initiatives towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Government of Punjab has established an inclusive planning framework that integrates the SDGs into its provincial policies. The development structure considerably focuses on vital areas such as education, healthcare, poverty alleviation, and gender equality. A multi-sectoral approach-based strategy is adopted by the Government to accomplish the given task. It includes public-private partnerships, community engagement, and capacity building within government institutions to concentrate on the SDGs. Explicit initiatives, such as the Punjab Growth Strategy 2023, accentuate the need for inclusive economic development, human capital progress, and ecological sustainability, which eventually contribute to the accomplishment of SDGs at the provincial level ⁶. Other noteworthy measures taken by the government include Punjab Women Empowerment Package 2012, PWEI 2014, PWEP 2016, and Punjab Women Development Policy,

¹ H Rashid, *Women's Empowerment in Punjab: An Analysis of Socio-Cultural Challenges. Sustainable Business and Societies in Emerging Economies* 4, no. 1 (March 2022): 13–24.

² (McKinsey Global Institute, 2015)

³ (UNDP., 2020)

⁴ (PBS., 2022)

⁵ PCSW., (Punjab in Figures. Punjab Pakistan: GOP, 2020).

⁶ PCSW.

2018. The provincial assembly of the Punjab has also initiated various legislations for women's rights. These include The Punjab Fair Representation of Women Bill (2014), The Punjab Reproductive, Maternal, Neo-natal & Child Health Authority Bill (2014), and The Punjab Maternity Benefits (Amendment) Bill (2015), The Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Bill (2015).⁷

The promising outcomes of these initiatives are becoming increasingly evident. The province has improved in educational enrollment rates and access to healthcare. Additionally, the establishment of the Punjab SDG Support Unit, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has reinforced monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. All these efforts ensure the systematic tracking of the progress. Also, the alignment of the growth with the targets set for 2030 is assured.⁸

Despite the above commitments and initiatives by the Government of the Punjab, the challenges regarding gender equality are persistent. The primary challenge is women's effective inclusion in multiple significant sectors. It is an agreed fact that the establishment of Inclusive structures in all significant domains is essential to empower the marginalized and deprived communities of society. If a society or state does not entertain diversity through inclusive strategies, accomplishing social justice is impossible that is the root of sustainable national growth and an equitable future of the population.

The paper assessed the degree of gender equality in the province of the Punjab, through Gender Empowerment Measures. It evaluates women's inclusion and representation in particular demarcated domains by the UN. The defined criterion will be helpful in analyzing and measuring the extent of women's empowerment in the province of Punjab.

With the commencement of last decade of 20th century, various development agencies took hold to trigger up the process of social change.⁹ In 1995, the fourth world conference on women in Beijing played a significant role in taking empowerment in development perspective. The Beijing platform for Action is stated as a "woman's studies curriculum" that produced those activists and scholars which took the women's movement into 21st century. After this, a broader change has been observed regarding awareness and understanding of women's concerns. Special measures have been introduced to increase and ensure women's participation.¹⁰ The Beijing Platform for Action, the Beijing +5 Declaration and Resolutions, the Cairo Program, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Convention on Elimination for all kinds of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and all other international initiatives regarding women's issues, put forth Women Empowerment as a top priority and national, regional and international institutions were also directed to draft policies to empower the women.¹¹

With the advent of 21st century, much attention has been paid by United Nations on women's rights. MDGs replaced by SDGS in 2016, instigated empowerment of women as main concern for international community. It directed all member states to adopt policies that can ensure women's inclusion in developmental sectors and decision making structures. The evolution illustrates that original use of term "Women Empowerment" was related to uphold of oppressing community or

⁷ Rashid, "(2022)."

⁸ (UNDP., 2020)

⁹ T Tandon, "Women Empowerment: Perspectives and Views," *The International Journal of Indian Psychology* 3 (2016).

¹⁰ S Arnfred, "Questions of Power: Women's Movements, Feminist Theory and Development Aid," in *Discussing Women's Empowerment: Theory and Practice* (Vol, ed. A Sisask (Stockholm: Sida Studies, 2001).

¹¹ (Malhotra et al., 2002)

class of society to enable them to overcome the subjugation and get the control of their lives. With the passage of time, use of term shifted from dilemma of oppression to gender equality and then in into development goals.

United Nations conducted a series of conferences and declarations including FWCW Beijing 1995, UN Conference on Environment and Development +5, World Summit for Social Development Copenhagen 1995, World Summit for Social Dvelopment+5, World Conference on Human Rights Vienna 1993, The Millennium Declaration 2000 and Sustainable Development Declaration, to attain the goal of Human Rights. It also concentrated the issue of women empowerment and concluded that Equal Participation and representation of both genders in developmental activities, and political process, is essential to make women self-reliant.

The acceptability of a decision in a political framework, is intricately linked to 'Power'. Even in a democratic setup, the democratic values and constitutional rules are not only agents of consensus-building but also derive from a possessed degree of power by several groups and individuals. The effectiveness of a decision is based on its acceptance ¹²

Women's inclusion in political decision-making is vital for democratic governance. Political arrangements are considered fragile when the voice of half of the population is not included in it. Social and political justice can never be ensured without equal and meaningful participation and influence of women in the decision-making structures.

Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 suggested adopting all those measures that can ensure women's access to participatory and decision-making structures.¹³

The implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) in Punjab, Pakistan, has been the subject of extensive analysis, highlighting progress and ongoing challenges in achieving gender equality and empowering women.

Several obstacles to achieving SDG 5 in Punjab have been identified in the literature. According to Ali and Tariq patrilineal tendencies and conservative societal norms of Punjab perpetuate gender-based discrimination. These cultural factors significantly limit women's access to resources and opportunities and contribute to gender discrimination. The Punjab Human Development Report concludes that economic barriers and restricted access to resources are primary factors to accomplish the goal of gender equality.¹⁴ Researcher stresses that the appointment of women on decision-making positions is essential to achieve gender equality and women empowerment. No community can be powerful until their voices are heard in the houses of power. Women representatives can play an imperative role in uplifting the status of their gender community. Their ineffective and inactive role is a primary factor of gender disparity. Political and institutional challenges also hinder the effective implementation of gender equality policies.¹⁵ discusses the political and institutional challenges that hamper the effective implementation of policies related to gender issues. He asserts that weak enforcement and inadequate coordination among institutions undermine the effectiveness of these policies.

¹² B R Farnham, *Roosevelt and the Munich Crises: A Study of Political Decision-Making* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997).

¹³ (UN, 2015)

¹⁴ Rashid (2022)

¹⁵ Siddiqui (2022)

2. Methods

This research employs a mixed-methods approach to provide a comprehensive analysis of gender equality and women's empowerment in Punjab, Pakistan. The Case study method was adopted to investigate the selected problem. The methodology integrates quantitative and qualitative data sources to offer a conclusive understanding of the research problem. Quantitative data was collected from various government and international institutional reports, including those from the Punjab Government, UN Women, and other relevant agencies, to analyze statistical trends and disparities across primary sectors. This data provided a foundation for identifying key issues and measuring progress against established benchmarks. Qualitative data contains policy documents, legislative texts, research articles, and expert beliefs to get perceptions into the implementation and impression of gender-related initiatives. The mixed-methods approach permits a vigorous investigation by merging numerical data with contextual understanding. Based on the findings from both data sources, the study proposes targeted recommendations aimed at addressing identified gaps and enhancing the effectiveness of existing policies and programs.

3. Analysis/Discussion

GEM is the criteria or measures, define by United Nations to assess or measure the degree of empowerment within a specific system. Gender Empowerment Measures (GEM) are based on three indicators, recognized by UNDP to measure the degree of women empowerment that include; Women's access to economic opportunities, Economic participation of Women in high-paying positions with economic power, Access to parliamentary and professional positions and decision-making. Keeping in view the third indicator that is relevant to this study, calculation to measure gender empowerment can be made by investigating the ratio of women parliamentarians in legislative assemblies and senior women officials, Most of scholars aren't finding these indicators sufficient.¹⁶

Kaur identifies five indicators to measure women's empowerment including economic indicators, educational indicators, health indicators, demographic indicators, and political indicators. Though she acknowledges that these measures are not enough to get the exact degree but somehow, are helpful to determine the status of women in various aspects of life.¹⁷ Santillan, D et al, finds out five indicators to measure women empowerment in the socio-economic sphere included production, housework, contribution in family expenditure, community participation, and rights of husband and wives in family.¹⁸ Biswas after analyzing certain studies put forward the eleven indicators to measure the degree of women empowerment. These include Mobility, Decision-making power, Autonomy, Ownership of household assets, freedom from domination in the family, political and legal awareness, participation in social and development activities, exposure to information media, inclusion in development programs, reproductive rights, and contribution in family income or expenditures.¹⁹ Keeping in view the divergent suggestions of scholars, it can be argued that selection of indicators is based on the level and type of empowerment. In addition, as it is complicated to make an appropriate measurement, so strategy to segregate its various domains would be helpful. The measurements obtained in this way will be more systematic and accurate.

¹⁶ J Syed, "Reconstructing Gender Empowerment," *Women's Studies International Forum* 33 (2010): 283–94.

¹⁷ S Kaur, "Issue of Women's Empowerment in Punjab: A Critique," *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 71, no. 1 (2010): 333–44.

¹⁸ Diana Santillan et al., *Developing Indicators to Access Women's Empowerment in Vietnam. Development in Practice* 14, no. 4 (2004): 534–49.

¹⁹ T K Biswas, "Measuring Women's Empowerment: Indicators and Measurement Techniques," *Social Change* 34, no. 3 (2004): 64–77.

As far as selection of indicators is concerned, it is worth noting that in above mentioned analysis of existing literature, some of the indicators given by scholars are common. One of them is involvement of women in decision-making process. On the other hand, participation of women in politics and political decision-making process is also considered essential by scholars to achieve empowerment. A detailed introduction of the concept is sufficient to estimate the importance of its relationship with decision-making process.

Measurement of Degree of Women Empowerment in the Punjab, Through Gender Empowerment Measures (GEM) Indicators Demarcated by United Nations

The study has carefully chosen following three specific indicators that are established by United Nations for the calculation of said task.

Indicator: 1 Women's Economic Participation and Access to Economic Opportunities

Indicator: 2 Participation of Women on High-Paying Positions with Economic Power

Indicator: 3 Women's Access to Parliamentary and Professional Positions.

The collected data is based on statistics provided by Pakistan Bureau of statistics and Punjab Commission on the status of women. The results are demonstrated in the forms of figures and tables.

3.1 Indicator.1: Women's Economic Participation and Access to Economic Opportunities

Economic empowerment enables women to get access to economic resources and prospects. To ensure women's access to economic opportunities, such policies should be implemented in economic zones that can develop favorable economic environment for women, in doing business, jobs and access to financial sector. They must have power to make economic decisions too. Economically empowered women contribute to their families, societies and national economies.²⁰ According to the World Economic Forum Report, 2021, Pakistan ranked 153 globally and 7 regionally, on Global Gender Parity Index in terms of economic participation of women. According to the reports, the percentage of women labor force participation is 22.6, on managerial positions 4.9% and in professional and technical roles 25.3%. A Woman's income in Pakistan is 16.3% of a man's income only. The reports also pointed out that women are deprived of non-financial assets and ownership of land too.²¹ The situation is also very imbalanced in Punjab. According to the UNDP's Pakistan National Human Development Report, the country has the lowest Gender Inequality Index value. Moreover, the loss of human development is lowest in the province of Punjab due to gender inequality.²² As per recent recorded figures, Participation rate in male is 50.5% and for female 19.6%. Unemployment ratio between both genders shows vast disparity that is 5.4% and 17.5% in male and female respectively.²³ According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2018 and Punjab Gender Parity Report (2018), Very few literate women earn their livelihood compared to men, both in rural and urban areas of Punjab. Following table indicates women's lack of access and inclusion to employment opportunities in Punjab.

Table: Comparison of Men and Women's Economic Participation and Access to Economic Opportunities

Areas	Men	Women	GPI value
Employment-to-population ratios by sex	77.9%	27.3%	0.350

²⁰ M Sohail, "Women Empowerment and Economic Development-An Exploratory Study in Pakistan," *Developing Country Studies* 4, no. 9 (2014): 163–70.

²¹ A Ahmed, 2021.

²² UNDP., 2020.

²³ PCSW., (2018).

and age (15 years and above)			
Employment-to-population ratios by sex and age (15-24 years)	56.7%	22.7%	0.400
Labor force participation percentage	82%	29.6%	0.360
Literate employed population	20.9%	3.7%	0.177
Illiterate employed population	11.7%	9.2%	0.786
The share of wage and salaried employment	44.8%	29%	0.647
Regular paid employee with fix wage rate	55.4%	42%	0.758
Casual paid employee	28.9%	14.7%	0.508
Unemployment ratio	5.5%	7.7%	1.4
employed workforce in Rural Areas	66.1%	33.9%	0.512
employed workforce in Urban areas	85.7%	14.2%	0.166

Source: Developed by the Researcher with the help of data available in "Pakistan Employment trends", 2018 by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics and "Punjab Gender Parity Report", 2018 by PCSW.

The table indicates the vast disparity between both genders who earn their livelihood. Moreover, significant difference can be seen between both genders' share in labor force and share of wage and salaried employment at fix and casual paid wages. Total inclusion of women in labor force is 29.6 percent only, while for men it is 82%. The ratio of unemployed women is 7.7%, which is higher than men in Punjab. In wages and salaried employment, women's ratio of inclusion is only 29%, while men enjoy 15% more share than women.²⁴ The table also specifies that ratio of employed literate females that is far fewer than the ratio of men.²⁵ As far as gender wage gap is concerned, it ranges from 0% to 45% as prescribed into ILO's Global Wage Report 2016-17. It tends to be less in minimum paid jobs and largest in the maximum paid jobs. ILO report assesses Pakistan's gender wage gap at 26%. The report suggests that women here are facing higher wage gaps in those industries where they are employed in large numbers and lower gaps in industries in which they under-represented. In Punjab, 54.2% of women (in paid employment) in urban areas and 53.6% of women in rural areas earn less than five thousands per month rupee, while for same earning level, ratio of men is only 8.9% and 6.6% in rural and urban areas respectively.²⁶

3.2 Indicator:2 Participation of Women on High-paying Positions with Economic Power

According to the report of a study conducted by ILO in 2015, Pakistan ranked 108 out of 108 countries with women managers. The report describes that only 3% women are working on management positions in the country.²⁷ Punjab Employment Trends indicated that from 2010-2011, there were only 1.69% male working as employers while 0.16% employers were women. Among these, 2.81% women employers belonged to urban while 0.68 % belonged to rural areas.

²⁴ PBS., (2018).

²⁵ PCSW., (2018).

²⁶ PCSW.

²⁷ DAWN., (Retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1157221> [https:// www, 2015](https://www.dawn.com/news/1157221)).

The percentage of own-account working women is also very low in Punjab. Only 17.56% women comparing to 42.32% men were own-account workers. Among the mentioned figures of women, 34.06% belonged to urban while 36.29 % belonged to rural areas. Moreover, on professional posts, only 0.73 % women are working, while for the same posts percentage of men is 0.89. According to the Punjab Gender Parity Report 2018, in the Ombudsman's office of the Punjab, all 24 consultants are men and neither is woman. Likewise, among thirteen general members of Punjab Public Service Commission, none is woman.²⁸

According to the Compendium on Gender statistics of Pakistan 2019, no women is appointed on highest grade seat that is BS-22 in Punjab while only one is appointed at Basic Scale 21.²⁹ Following table shows difference of access of both genders to highest professional posts.

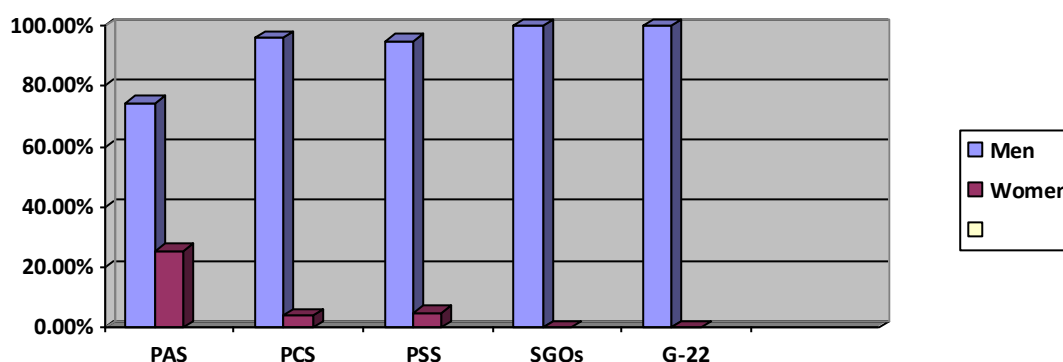


Figure: Disparity between Men and Women's Access to Highest Professional Posts

Source: Developed by the Researcher, with the help of available data in Punjab Gender Parity Report, 2018 by PCSW (p.48)

The table illustrates ratio of women's inclusion versus men in three dignified services of the Punjab that are PAS, PCS and PSS. Moreover, out of total 6 SGO's, not a single woman is appointed, nor any appointment of woman is seen at grade twenty two that is highest grade.

Besides employment opportunities and participation of women in high grade positions, huge gap exists between both gender, in terms of access and ownership of physical capital. Out of total agricultural landowners of Punjab, 68.7% are men while, 31.3% are women. In 2017, out of total vehicles, only 1% is owned by women, remaining 99% are owned by men. Moreover 5% driving license were issued to women while the ratio of men in same category was 95 %. According to the data of BOP, women owned 26.8% deposit accounts and 24% current account, while for men this percentage was 73.2% and 76%, with a GPI of 0.365 and 0.316 respectively.

3.3 Indicator: 3 Accesses to Parliamentary and Professional Positions

According to the Compendium on Gender statistics of Pakistan 2019, women members are considerably outnumbered by male members in both federal and provincial legislatures. The rate of representation reflects a significant disparity between both sexes, comparing to their proportion in population. Among elected members of Punjab Assembly 2018, out of 371 total seats, 73 were female legislators that constitute 19.67% share of total Assembly's membership, while men are

²⁸ PCSW., (2018).

²⁹ P B O Statistics, *Compendium on Gender Statistics of Pakistan 2019* (Islamabad, Pakistan: Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform, 2019).

298 in number that makes the percentage of 80.32. Although in both National and Punjab Assembly, women are given representation on reserved seats according to the allocated quota system, still women remain disproportionately underrepresented. The table below highlights current existing difference between both genders in terms of access to Parliamentary and professional positions in Punjab.

Table: Difference of Access to Parliamentary and Professional Positions of both Genders

Position	Men	Women	GPI Value
Legislators	298	73	0.244
Provincial Ministers	30	4	0.133
Parliamentary Secretary	38	5	0.131
Chairperson of PC	34	2	0.058
Voters	26.99M	33.68M	0.801
Gazetted Officers	70.7%	29.3%	0.414
Non-Gazetted Officers	91.1%	8.9%	0.097

Source: Developed by the Researcher

In the Punjab Assembly, there are only 4 female provincial Ministers as compared to 30 men, and 5 women Parliamentary Secretaries compared to 38 men. There are 34 male Chairpersons of Parliamentary Committees, while only 2 female appointed on this status.³⁰

Within the public sector, the number of female officers (Gazetted and Non-Gazetted) remains significantly lower than men. Out of a total of 26,033 Gazetted Officers of 181 provincial departments, there were 18,408 (70.7%) male Gazetted Officers and 7,625 (29.3%) female Gazetted Officers. On the other hand, out of total 62,098 Non-Gazetted officers, there were 5,526 (8.9%) female officers and 56,572 (91.1%) male officers.³¹ The detail of percentage of women in other significant professional positions has already been discussed in indicator 2. According to the statistics of ECP, the number of total registered women voters in Punjab is 26.99 million and men voters are 33.68 million. It makes the percentage of 44.49 and 55.51 respectively (2018). The difference between number of male and female registered voters remains substantial at 11.2%.

3.4 Reflections

- The study finds out that the gender equality is still a distant dream in the province of Punjab. Despite an almost equal demographic ratio, women continue to lag significantly behind men across all primary sectors.
- It is the obligation of all member states of the United Nations to articulate and implement strategies aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5, which underlines gender equality and women's empowerment, but in case of Pakistan, a huge difference between theory and practice can be detected.
- Slight improvements can be observed compared to previous years particularly in the Province of the Punjab that is considered to be most progressive region in term of gender equality and women empowerment. The Punjab Government has prioritized both domains by implementing several initiatives aimed at empowering women and reducing gender bias, including the establishment of women development department and Punjab commission on the status of women. However, the progress is nominal compared to other

³⁰ PCSW., (2018).

³¹ PCSW.

member states across the world. Pakistan is committed to and a signatory to various international human and women rights accords and in this context, the efforts contributed by the provincial government are not up to the mark.

- The study reveals that the rate of appointment of women in high-ranking positions including economic and political sectors is very low. Statistics compiled by the researcher reveal the lowest GPI value recorded in favor of women in Punjab. It also demonstrates that the appointment of women legislators on decision-making positions, particularly in the cabinet, as parliamentary secretaries and chairpersons of committees in the Punjab Assembly has been very low in the two selected eras. It also determined that women's access to economic opportunities is very low; predominantly their access to high paid economic position is trivial.

4. Way Forward

Based on the analysis of gender disparities and the current initiatives in Punjab, the following recommendations are suggested to elevate the status of women and to accomplish the goal of gender equality.

- Empowerment entails change and collective change requires change at the individual level. Individual empowerment gradually leads toward community empowerment. Women are needed to get familiar with their worth. Agents of socialization should play significant role in empowering women at individual level.
- Re-distribution of power at all levels and gradual social transformation can lead toward greater empowerment of women. Specific socio-cultural patterns that hinder women's development can be decayed. Education, religion, technology, means of communication, and awareness programs for broadening of views can be helpful tools to achieve the mentioned task.
- There is an imperative need to increase women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels, including Economy, local governance, and leadership positions. This could be implicated through the quotas or targeted programs to support women's entry into these roles.
- Women needed to rethink their role. Unless a community unites for its interest, no one else can ensure their wellbeing. Women need to build up their capacities and work hard to make their place and status. They need to work together to overcome the deficiencies and one would be able to benefit from the other's abilities. To achieve this task, the formation of Self Help Groups or platforms at the social, organizational, and political levels would be helpful to for consensus building among divergent approaches. Disagreements and discussions would be discussed on an intellectual level rather than personal. That will eventually unite the whole community for the sake of their collective interests.
- The Government of the Punjab should focus on enhancing the monitoring mechanisms for implementing policies, such as the Punjab Women Empowerment Package and relevant legislations. This can be accomplishing by setting vibrant benchmarks and accountability measures. It will ensure the effective execution and regular assessment of the existing policies.
- Women, who are selected on leading positions in legislative structures must receive training regarding Assembly's preceding, method for legislation, and all other relevant matters. Services of senior members of the Assembly who have served continuously in the past, law expertise,

researchers, and professors can be borrowed for this training. Special curriculum including assessments should be designed to make training more effective.

- The Government needed to improve access to education and vocational training for women, particularly in rural areas. Skill development Programs for women should be introduced aligning with market needs.

5. Conclusion

The research shows that transformation in traditional socio-cultural patterns in the province of Punjab can improve women's social status. The best social status empowers a woman at the individual level that gradually leads towards community empowerment. To pursue the community's rights and interests, one cannot overlook the significance of political participation. Effective participation of the women's community in the political process leads to their representation in the chambers of power. Mere showmanship of women in the houses of power cannot make them empowered. Redefining the gender roles and responsibilities, power redistribution in social and state institutions, skill development, trainings, and women themselves can act as agents of re-shaping the power structures. It can be concluded in a way that the more status will be given to women in social and political institutions, the most effective would be their contribution in political decision-making and the gender equality will be achieved.

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