**Women in development**

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Sustainable development is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. In 2015, the UN General Assembly enacted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), outlining how these SDGs will be accomplished worldwide by 2030.

SDG-5 explicitly aspires to promote gender equality and empower all women and girls. Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and girls is not only a basic human right but also vital to achieving long-term sustainability. The multiplier impact of empowering women has been repeatedly demonstrated to enhance economic growth and development. The social, economic, and educational advancement of women significantly affects the overall system. Development is accelerated by gender equality. It rationalizes the economy and aids in positive performance and effectiveness of the economy.

First, it removes any obstacles that prevent women from participating in the economy, business, health, and other areas that contribute to a strong, capable, and developed nation. Second, it encourages and empowers women to participate more actively in politics and society so they may contribute to both at their highest possible level. Third, it elevates women's status and thus contributes to society's advancement.

The benefits of gender equality to growth and development cannot be denied; nevertheless, Pakistan's progress in this domain is dismal. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, 2022, Pakistan is ranked 145th out of 146 countries, marginally ahead of Afghanistan. The gender gap is assessed in terms of educational achievement, economic involvement, physical and mental health, and political empowerment.

In the four sub-indexes, Pakistan ranks 145th in economic participation and opportunity, 135th in educational attainment, 143rd in health and survival, and 95th in political empowerment. Pakistan was one of the ten nations with the greatest gaps in economic participation and opportunity while narrowing 33.1 per cent of the gap.

In terms of population, Pakistan ranks fifth in the world. Unfortunately, Pakistan accounts for less than 0.4 per cent of the total global GDP, while the other four most populous countries account for 45 per cent of the total global GDP. Due to a lack of attention in terms of education, health insurance, job availability, less attractive packages, and a variety of other factors, Pakistan's young labour force is not as productive as it ought to be.

The prime issue is that women account for less than 20 per cent of the total labour force in the country, implying that they constitute a very small proportion of the productive labor force. This must be increased by investing more in females in terms of education, health care, and other facilities that contribute to increasing our share of the country's GDP and, by extension, our share of global GDP.

In a nutshell, greater gender parity and women's economic engagement are significantly linked to social and economic prosperity. Education, health, and mobility for women are critical for human growth and long-term sustainability. Pakistan lags behind in almost every significant indicator. The government must strive to guarantee that all of its citizens have access to fundamental rights such as education. However, owing to conventional dogmas and cultural practices, education alone is inadequate to allow women to join the labour sector in Pakistan.

Implementing steps to reduce household care chores (for example, free daycare and gender quotas for female workers) would surely enhance women's economic participation. These prejudices can only be eliminated by raising awareness. Through public awareness and education campaigns, there is also a compelling need to change cultural norms and attitudes that discriminate against women.

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