



**Abstract:** *State is considered to be the custodian of rights of vulnerable segments like women. Neoliberal ideology advocates women's participation in the economic arena, yet it resists state role in the economic sphere for protection of the "second" gender. State role for protection of women is equally intolerable for the custodians of tradition. Ideology of state feminism believes that interest articulation for the protection of women must be done on the system/state level. The paper aims to reflect on the state's role in eliminating the prevalent gender lag in the context of cultural and economic lag between regions and classes? The qualitative methodology of "gap analysis" is employed. The study is based on data analysis of Pakistan's performance on Sustainable Development Goals and Global Gender Gap index 2021. The core finding of the study is that though the equality/equity between genders is still an imagined reality yet state initiatives are the first steps from baseline.*

**Key Words:** State Feminism, Gender Disparities, Pakistan

## Introduction

The prime concern of debate in Social Sciences, dealing with individual and collective; public and private lived experiences; remains state as it provides for rules, norms, and laws governing human behavior. State with its institutionalized structure is and will remain important due to its regulative capability to implement norms, rules, and laws; its distributive function to allocate resources amongst its population on various levels of human and economic development; and with its capacity to penetrate horizontally across regions as well as vertically downwards to household levels to limit, influence and control battle of sexes for the advantage of weaker (second) sex.

The paper aims to reflect on vital questions about state roles from the perspective of gender. To what extent state can penetrate the lived experience of women beings to protect them in work and family spaces from male beings; and influence and transform the most personal levels of gender relations, i.e., sexuality and reproduction; in a context that gender roles are guarded and protected by the custodians of tradition? Another subtle point in need of reflection is whether a new social contract between genders and the enhanced role of women in the public sphere results in elevation of women

status or increase HER vulnerabilities? In a given context, what will be the role of the state in the domain of gender relations in public as well as private spheres; whether state's role as arbiter will be sufficient to correct imbalance or state must enter the arena to protect women subjects?

The above-mentioned questions about state role in the domain of gender give rise to epistemological debates and contradictory explanations based on different standpoints. A group of Socialist Feminists considers the state as instrumental to protect male-dominated hierarchy, considering the concept of "state feminism as oxymoron" (Köpl 2001), where a "state patriarch championing women liberation" (Zheng Vol 31, No 3 (Fall 2005)), but given social democrats, state with its functions of welfare is essential to mitigate dualism of conflicting gender interests, bringing equality and equity and arrange them in a mutually dependent system of relations. Hence State Feminism is the feminism articulated and implemented by the state through Women Policy Agencies (WPA) (A. G. McBride 2010), elsewhere signified as gender machineries. (D. a. McBride 2011) The state acts as a participant in the arena, not only formulating policy but also articulating interests. Sometimes states have to devise policy as

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a result of international treaty commitments and act as guardians of the women populace due to evaluation and recommendations of the international community. Mechanisms like Universal Periodic Reviews by UN Human Rights Council; evaluations of sustainable development Goal 5 (Gender Equality), and other indicators like Global Gender Gap report by World Economic Forum, keep the state vigilant about the state of affairs regarding women; access baseline and measure the gap between parity and inequality between genders. The women are perceived as the trivialized, marginalized, and all the more silenced segment unable to participate in contests of ideas and meaning, in need of the state to articulate their interests. Contrary to Socialism critique of state that signifies state as a patriarchal-capitalist agent, maintaining status quo in favor of male and market forces; and the Liberal Feminist agenda of squeezing state role, at the same time making women accessible for labor market; the social-democratic conception of State Feminism demands more active role of the state to bring change in praxis through piecemeal social engineering.

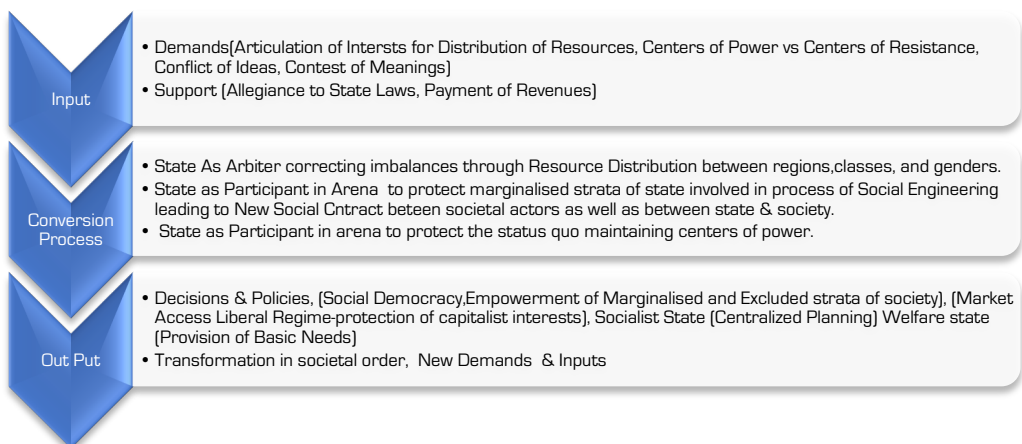
The paper aims to provide a gap analysis between women empowered and dependent scenarios and take the state role as intervening variable and transforming agent. Taking an overview of different strands of feminist epistemology and building a perspective on dependency and empowerment, the paper will provide a gap analysis based on evaluation by International Governing Organizations/International Civil Society analysis of actual conditions of women in Pakistan. The study takes State Feminism as an intervening factor to bridge the gap for perceived scenarios of gender parity.

The paper is divided into the following segments.

1. Building the Concept Cluster: Dependency, Empowerment and State Feminism
2. Gap Analysis as Methodology
3. Assessment of Gender Gap in Pakistan
4. State Feminism in Pakistan: An Overview of Social Legislation regarding women
5. Pakistani Women: Between Dependency and Empowerment (Gap Analysis)

#### Building the Concept Cluster: Dependency, Empowerment and State Feminism

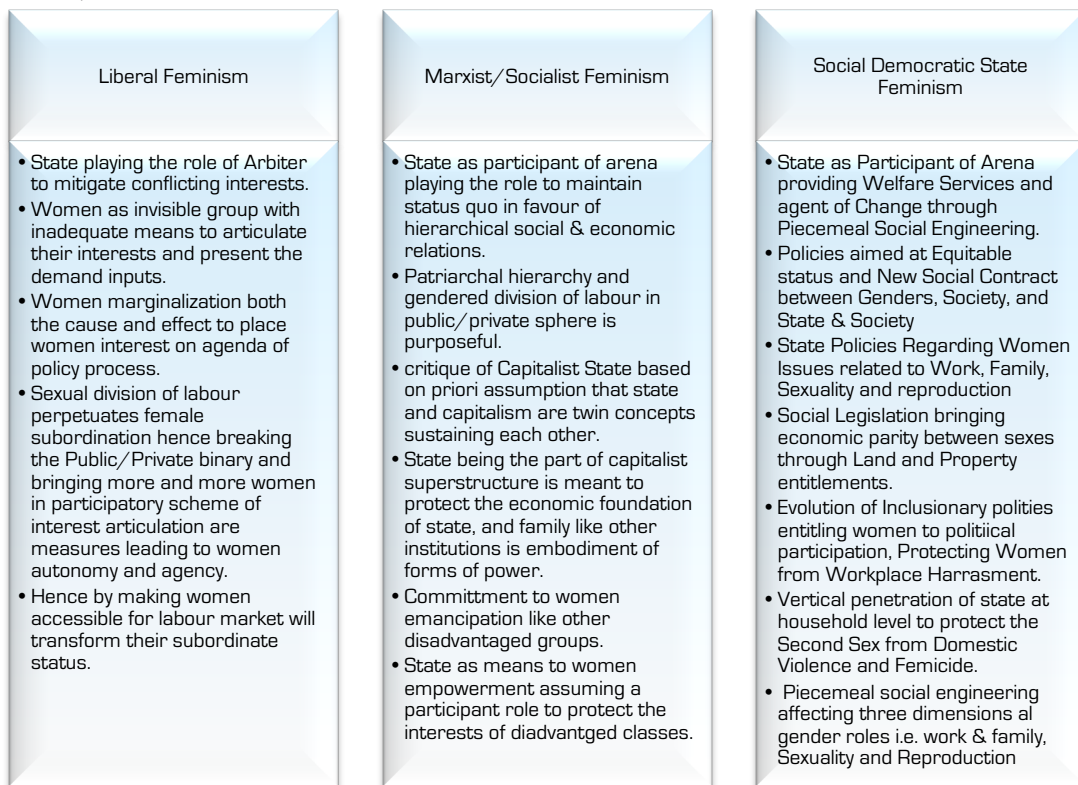
The state will remain the prime institution (despite the factual critique that it represents the interests of power) that can save humans from the selfish, evils, dominating drives of fellows; as well as to administer justice not only in its juridical facet but also in its distributive aspect; to create a more or less harmonious society with fewer conflict of interests. The state that appears as a homogenous entity from outside is, in fact, the amalgamation of a multitude of power centers with varied and contradictory interests, camouflaged under the mask of ideas. Hence according to the Pluralist/ Neo-Pluralist conception of State, state policy is a result of dialectics of ideas and contest of meaning and interpretation. Pluralists are further divided on the role of the state as arbiter to correct an imbalance or a co-equal participant in the arena as a contestant of ideas, interpretation, and meaning. On the other hand, the Marxist thinkers see the interventionist role of the state as an essential pre-requisite to transform existing social order in favor of subordinate strata of the population, and women as one such group facing discrimination in public as well as the private sphere. [\(Turner, 1997\)](#)



**Figure 1:** David Easton Input-Output Model from Pluralist/ Neo Pluralist, Socialist, and Social Democratic Perspective

The above-mentioned interpretive diagram of David Easton Input/output model of the political system signifies the matrix of different roles a political system can embrace. Feminism has multiple strands; hence their demands from state and

perception about state roles and policy outcomes are based on their respective epistemology and Conception of agency about women being.



**Figure 2:** Comparative Study of Feminist Epistemologies and perception of State Roles

Despite their consensus about women's marginalization and subordinate status, all the three Feminist epistemological standpoints base their arguments by critically revisiting the base suppositions of other strands. For liberals an inclusionary economy is the means to break women dependency in the private sphere, but the Critical strand of feminism based on Marxist materialistic reading of history as women as well as the center-left paradigm of state feminism argue that liberal feminism is a mask disguising the interests of capital as empowered, enterprising but infinitely resilient women can be easily persuaded to repay debts. [Köpl, 2001] Furthermore, the inclusion of women in the economic sphere does not mean equal or equitable economic status for men and women. They

are rewarded and incorporated in the national and international economic arena differently. Furthermore, women are already part of the active workforce running the household 'care economy', entry in the public arena results in dual and sometimes triple work stresses in case of reproductive and care activities are traditionally the responsibility of women, both in North as well as South. [Steans 2006, 86-87] In case of liberal assumptions about "rolling back" state and its welfare services, economic inequalities are increasing rather than decreasing. But the critical Marxist approach to gender also disapproves of feminism initiated and approved by the state and believe that an institution dominated by male with a subservient status to capitalism is inherently

incapable of bringing a revolution in the status of genders. However, the protagonists of state feminism are of the view that a balanced approach charged with humanism inherent in left with inclusionary participatory mechanisms, can rescue not only the Marxist/Socialist paradigm from their post-capitalist utopia. Hence State feminism is a pragmatic approach leading to small, achievable and meaningful small changes without abruptly disrupting the social fabric of society.

### Gap Analysis as Methodology

Gap analysis is generally referred to as the activity by which we become able to identify the difference

between the ideal and real state of any event or situation. However, one should do a pre-test to define the ideal and real states as well; before applying gap analysis one should be aware of the actual state of the event prevalent in the society as well as one should also know the ideal state that has been set as an ideal to achieve the desired goals. The difference between these two definitions is known as 'gap'. If the gap is identified, then we can develop a modified game plan to achieve the desired future state of that event or situation.

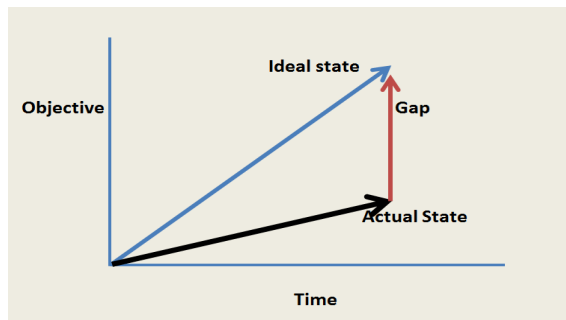


Figure 3: Gap Analysis as Methodology

The gap analysis includes the following steps

1. Current state: Analyze the current situation
2. Future state: Establish specific targets from the given objectives
3. Gap account: After comparing target goals against the current situation the gap is identified
4. Proposal and Plan: Draw a comprehensive plan to fill out those gaps and reach the desired object

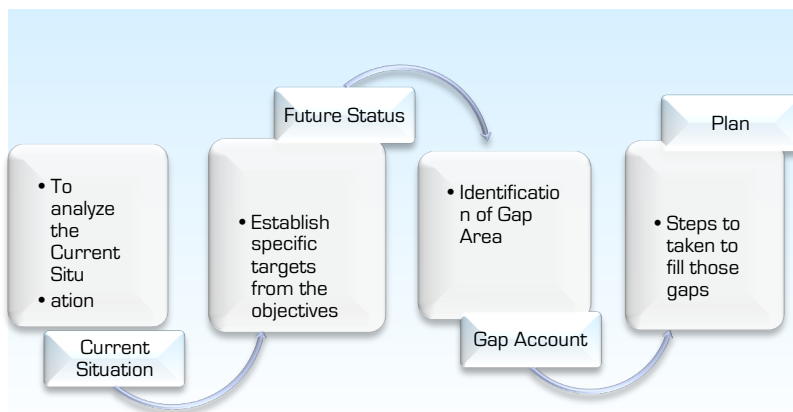


Figure 4: Plan of Research

## Assessment of Gender Gap in Pakistan

The gender gap is a reality across the globe, however, distance to parity differs in different regions. According to the Global Gender Gap index 2021, it will take 135.6 years to cover the gap. A world based on gender equality is necessary for sustainable development of states, communities, and households. To achieve these objectives, various global agencies monitor and evaluate the gender gap. To identify gender lag in Pakistan, the study has selected three big data reports, i.e., World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report 2021, Sustainable Development Solution Network Report 2021, and Universal Periodic Review Cycle 3 recommendations for Pakistan.

### Pakistan's Performance in World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report 2021

World Economic Forum Global gender gap index 2021 measures the gap on the basis of four indicators, i.e., economic participation, educational attainment, health and survival, political

empowerment. The report takes into account of statistical data of 156 countries. The following table about four Muslim states of South Asia is as follows. Pakistan's overall rank is 153 out of 156 countries. On two indicators, i.e., Economic Participation & Opportunity, and Health & Survival, Pakistan is among the bottom ten countries. On the indicator of Political, Empowerment Pakistan is at 98<sup>th</sup> position. Pakistan is one of those countries where a woman remained head of government and one of the top 33 countries on women representation in parliament. With 20.2% women representation in parliament and 10.7% in top ministerial positions. Pakistan has achieved this status by allocating quota seats for women filled through proportional representation to fill the Gap of women participation in general elections. Though women can participate in general seats in general elections yet due to cultural patterns and traditional norms serve as barriers in contestation of women in elections.

**Table 1.** Global Gender Index of South Asian Muslim Countries 2021

Indicators	Afghanistan		Bangladesh		Pakistan	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Economic Participation & Opportunity	156	0.180	147	0.418	152	0.316
Educational Attainment	156	0.514	121	0.951	144	0.811
Health and Survival	149	0.952	134	0.962	153	0.944
Political Empowerment	111	0.132	07	0.546	98	0.154



According to this report, 22.6% of women participate in the labor force, fewer than 4.9% of women are in managerial posts. Large income disparities exist between women and men. On average Pakistani women's income is 16.3% of a man's. Women units have equal access to justice, ownership of land and non-financial assets, inheritance rights. Hence there are signs of improvement, as professional and technical roles performed by women are raised a little bit from 23.4% to 25.3% from year 2020. 81.1% Pakistan's educational gap has been closed. 46.5% of women



are literate whereas 71.1% men are literate in Pakistan.

### Sustainable Development Solution Network (SDSN) Report's Pakistan's Estimation of SDG-5

The SDSN report is published every year in June and evaluates countries' performance on each SDG by accessing certain indicators. SDG-5 is meant to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. SDG-5 is evaluated on the basis of four indicators given in the table.

**Table 2.** Pakistan Performance by Goal 5s Indicators

SDG 5- Gender Equality	Ideal value	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods [% of females aged 15 to 49]	100%	48.6%	2018	Red	
The ratio of female-to-male mean years of education received [%]	100%	60.3%	2019	Red	

The ratio of female-to-male labor force participation rate [%]	100%	26.5%	2019	Red	
Seats held by women in national parliament [%]	50%	20.2%	2020	Red	

The report assesses Pakistan's situation in the first two indicators of demand for family planning and education to be a major challenge for the country, with scores either stagnant or increasing at less than 50 percent of the required ratio. In the last two indicators of labor force participation and political participation, Pakistan is at the losing end with a decrease in performance than in previous years.

### Universal Periodic Review by United Nations Human Rights Council

The United Nations Human Rights Council periodically reviews countries' human rights records. The working group convenes three 2-weeks sessions per year, in all 14 sessions in a review cycle of four-

and half-year periods. The third cycle started from 2017, and it will end in 2022. UPR is a mechanism that involves periodic review of human rights records in all member states of the UN. It provides a unique forum to all states to share their policies and actions taken to improve the human rights situation. Countries also share the challenges faced in the fulfillment of human rights. The other member states can propose recommendations to overcome those challenges. Pakistan's report in UPR cycle-3 was presented in 2017. For this study, SDG-5 is taken into account. UPR cycle-3 recommendations to Pakistan to achieve gender parity are given in the table below.

**Table 3.** UPR Cycle 3 Recommendations for SDG-5 Pakistan

Text	SDG Targets	Groups	Response (UPR)	Recommending State (UPR)
Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and continue strengthening the legislation aimed at the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women	5.1	Women and girls	Noted	Uruguay
Develop indicators and a Timeline for the implementation of the recent legislation on women's rights and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	5.1	Women and girls	Noted	Germany
Institute specific legislative Measures aimed at eliminating the practice of discrimination against minority groups, including women and girls	5.1	Women and girls, Members of Minorities	Noted	Uganda
As a follow-up to the recommendation in paragraph 122.38 from the second cycle, amend discriminatory laws and vigilantly counter discrimination against marginalized groups, including women and girls and ethnic and religious minorities, and provide a safe and just environment for all citizens in Pakistan	5.1	Women and girls, Members of Minorities	Noted	Haiti
Take urgent measures to protect women and girls against discrimination and gender disparities, in particular by ensuring their access to education.	5.1	Women and girls	Supported	Argentina
Continue efforts to combat and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.	5.1	Women and girls	Supported	Tunisia
Continue to implement additional measures to prevent discrimination against women and girls.	5.2	Women and girls, Children	Noted	Maldives
Accede to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	5.2	Women and girls	Noted	Honduras
Address the societal acceptance of violence against women and ensure punishment for all perpetrators of violence against women	5.2	Women and girls	Noted	Czechia

Text	SDG Targets	Groups	Response (UPR)	Recommending State (UPR)
Expedite the finalization of the national policy on ending violence against women and girls	5.2	Women and girls	Supported	Bangladesh
Speed up the finalization of its national policy on ending Violence against women and girls	5.2	Women and girls	Supported	South Africa
Enact legislation on domestic violence in all provinces	5.2	Women and girls	Supported	Sweden
Adopt legislation that criminalizes domestic violence in all provinces and ensure, promote and facilitate the effective implementation of this legislation by, inter alia, providing training for law enforcement officers	5.2	Women and girls	Supported	Belgium
Complete the existing legislation in order to combat all forms of violence against women throughout its territory	5.2	Women and girls	Supported	Switzerland
Ensure effective and monitored enforcement of existing federal and provincial legislation related to violence against Women	5.2	Women and girls	Supported	Sweden
Strengthen national legislation criminalizing violence against women in order to remove the existing loopholes that leave room for perpetrators to escape punishment	5.2	Women and girls	Supported	Uganda
Implement, effectively and stringently, legislation criminalizing violence against women and domestic violence, including marital rape, and improve data collection mechanisms on violence against women	5.2	Women and girls	Supported	Slovenia
Enforce effectively all relevant laws criminalizing violence against women and domestic violence	5.2	Women and girls	Supported	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Set up effective legislative or other measures to protect women and children against domestic violence and all forms of Ill-treatment	5.2	Women and girls, Children	Supported	Luxembourg
Increase the number and quality of gender-sensitive training events on violence against women for the judiciary and law enforcement agencies	5.2	Women and girls	Supported	Lithuania
Redouble efforts to enforce laws criminalizing gender-based violence, such as the recently adopted laws against rape and honor crimes	5.2		Supported	Brazil
Continue efforts aiming at empowering women, combating social and economic discrimination, and protecting them from violence	5.1; 5.2	Women and Girls	Supported	Poland
Enact and enforce legislation to afford legal protection from violence and discrimination to all its citizens, including women, girls, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex community and religious minorities, including through effective prosecutions in accordance with the rule of law	5.1, 5.2	Women and Girls, LGBTI, Members of Minorities	Noted	Australia
Strengthen efforts to prevent and combat all forms of discrimination and violence against women and children by means of reinforcing the relevant legal framework, running awareness campaigns, and ensuring that perpetrators are brought to justice, and victims receive appropriate help	5.1; 5.2	Women and Girls, Children	Supported	Italy
Continue to increase its efforts to prevent discrimination and violence against women	5.1; 5.2	Women and Girls	Supported	Japan
Intensify its efforts to combat violence and discrimination against women and girls by ensuring that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished	5.1; 5.2	Women and Girls	Supported	Djibouti
Enhance activities aimed at eliminating discrimination against women and gender-based violence	5.1; 5.2	Women and Girls	Supported	Kyrgyzstan

Text	SDG Targets	Groups	Response (UPR)	Recommending State (UPR)
Strengthen its efforts to combat discrimination and violence against women and girls to allow them to enjoy their rights under conditions of equality	5.1; 5.2	Women and Girls	Supported	Ecuador
Continue its efforts towards eradicating discrimination and violence against women and girls, including by fully implementing the laws against rape and honor crimes and thoroughly investigating and prosecuting all violations of those laws	5.1; 5.2	Women and Girls	Supported	New Zealand
Work on raising the legal marriage age to 18 year	5.3		Supported	Bahrain
Make 18 years the minimum age of marriage for women and men	5.3	Women and Girls	Noted	Iceland
Enact and enforce legislation that facilitates women's social, political, and economic empowerment, including in relation to child marriage and forced conversion	5.3	Women and Girls, Children	Noted	Australia
Amend the Child Marriage Restraint Act to include an equal minimum age of marriage of 18 years for all individuals	5.3	Children	Noted	Denmark
Take concrete steps aimed at increasing the minimum marriage age for girls from 16 to 18	5.3	Women and Girls	Noted	Namibia
Set the legal minimum age to marry at 18 years for males and females in all provinces, and ensure that the law is effectively enforced	5.3	Women and Girls	Noted	Belgium
Update national laws to cover all forms of trafficking and eliminate cross-border trafficking in persons and forced marriage	5.3		Noted	Sierra Leone
Abolish harmful customary practices against young girls in line with its commitments under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	5.1; 5.3	Women and Girls, Youth	Supported	Iceland
Take effective measures to ensure the full implementation of the laws against honor crimes and rape and raise the legal age of marriage to 18 years in all provinces	5.2; 5.3		Supported	Austria
Adopt measures that will enhance the implementation of legislation combating honor killing, rape, violence against women, and domestic violence	5.2; 5.3	Women and Girls	Supported	Cyprus
Continue progress towards equality between women and men, Increasing, and strengthening the representation of women in politics, economics, academia, and the judiciary. This also implies effective equality before the law, including inheritance rights, equal access to justice, equality in the effective exercise of their rights to education and health, and equal remuneration and access to credit and other financial services	5.5; 5.a	Women and Girls	Supported	Nicaragua
Ensure women's rights concerning their sexual and reproductive health through an enabling policy	5.6	Women and Girls	Supported	Iceland
Take effective measures to improve women's access to health services, in particular, reproductive health services	5.6	Women and Girls	Supported	Kazakhstan

As we have earlier discussed, most of the state's feminism is an outcome of international treaty commitments. UPR is a forum that keeps countries treaty bounded one such treaty is CEDAW (Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women), which came into operation in 1981. Pakistan rectified CEDAW in 1996; however, an Optional Protocol of CEDAW that became operational in 2000 is not rectified by Pakistan yet.

This optional protocol demands member states to recognize a committee where individual citizens can file complaints about Human Rights violations. This protocol can also establish inquiry procedures to conduct an inquiry about systematic violations of human rights. In UPR cycle-3 the international community-recommended Pakistan to ratify the Optional Protocol of CEDAW. The other significant advice was to initialize specific legislative measures



for gender equality; address the social acceptance of violence and ensure strict punishment for the perpetrators; enact legislation on domestic violence in all the provinces and remove loopholes in existing legislation that leave room for escape for perpetrators. In addition, UPR suggests the excess to education for all girls, raising the legal marriage age from 16 to 18 in all provinces, ensuring women's rights related to SRHR (Sexual & Reproductive Health Rights), and providing free legal aid to women in particular. UPR acknowledges the customary practices as a challenge to Gender parity in Pakistan and stresses on abolishing the harmful customary practices against women. It also accounts that Pakistan has covered a great distance to the goal of gender equality and suggests Pakistan continue the course by increasing and strengthening the representation of women in public spheres like politics, academia, economics, and judiciary.

#### **State Feminism in Pakistan: An Overview of Social Legislation Regarding Women**

Women-related reforms and women participation in voting activity dates back to the colonial period. Women participated as voters in 1937's election in British India. All constitutions of Pakistan (1956, 1962, 1973) guarantee women equal rights as citizens of Pakistan. Furthermore, these constitutions acknowledge women as marginalized strata and consider the need of equity to bring women at par with male citizens.

Pakistani state is well aware that women remain vulnerable to femicide activities inherent in male genes. Hence Pakistani state legislated the Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act (2011) to protect women from the hate instincts of males. Furthermore, the prevention of anti-women Practices Act (2011) made several oppressive and discriminatory, and customary practices like 'Karo-Kari' and 'Vani', a criminal offence with a punishment of three to seven years. The same act provides for punishment of depriving women of inherited property and bars forced marriages and marriage with Holy Quran a punishable offence. Criminal Law [Amendment] Offence of Rape Act (2016) provided immunity to women from rape, gang rape, rape of minors, and person with disabilities punishable with life imprisonment. As gathering evidence for such cases is a difficult task, DNA evidence is considered by Courts; and courts are directed to conclude such cases within three months. Another amendment in this law protects women from offenses on the pretext of Honor. Murder committed in the name of honor is punishable with death or life imprisonment

penalties even if the accused is pardoned by family members.

Pakistani state has not only protected the women belonging to the majority religion but also saved the Hindu minority women by passing the Hindu Marriage Act (2017) and protected women of the Hindu community from forced conversions and abduction. All the steps are taken by the Federal Government of Pakistan and are applicable across all provinces of Pakistan. 18<sup>th</sup> amendment in the constitution of Pakistan delegated more powers to provinces. Provinces are autonomous to take initiatives according to their cultural contexts.

Notably the province of Punjab is considered to be the most modern province of Pakistan. The culture of Punjab due to higher literacy rate is more open to change, and women dependency is making room for more empowered and independent women. Punjab government guarantees women's rights are sincere in its national and international commitments to create equity and equality between genders. Elimination of discrimination of women in public as well as most personal spheres of women lived experience i.e. family. Punjab government, through its Gender Machinery, the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, initiated women empowerment package PWEF (2012) and Punjab Women Empowerment Initiatives (2014, 2016 & 2017) to open public sphere for women economic participation. Practical steps were taken for women entrepreneurs to establish a business in women's institutions like girl's schools and colleges. Women are encouraged to earn their living even as cab or 'Rikshaw' drivers. But the most revolutionary step was to protect women's right of inheritance as granted by Islam. Women were not only given the right to inherit property, but they were also ensured the right to get a share in the yield and rent of agrarian and commercial properties. A comprehensive Punjab Women Development Policy was introduced to register women on empowerment scale.

The state entry in the personal sphere of women's life is barred by cultural taboos. The state can't protect its women citizens from male citizens in the bounds of household. The women remain subservient to their male counterparts, and their Socio-Legal status is subsumed by males leading to a dependent personality psychologically. The Pakistani state has taken active steps to protect women even in the sphere of household. Women don't take legal aid due to fear and cultural barriers against their close relations like husband, brothers, father, and in-law's. Women Crisis Center to protect women from such crises where close relatives are

involved. Women Crisis Center is established on district levels these centers not only provide legal aid to women but also provide the shelter and

psychological counseling to come out of the trauma of domestic violence.

### Pakistani Women: Between Dependency and Empowerment (Gap Analysis)

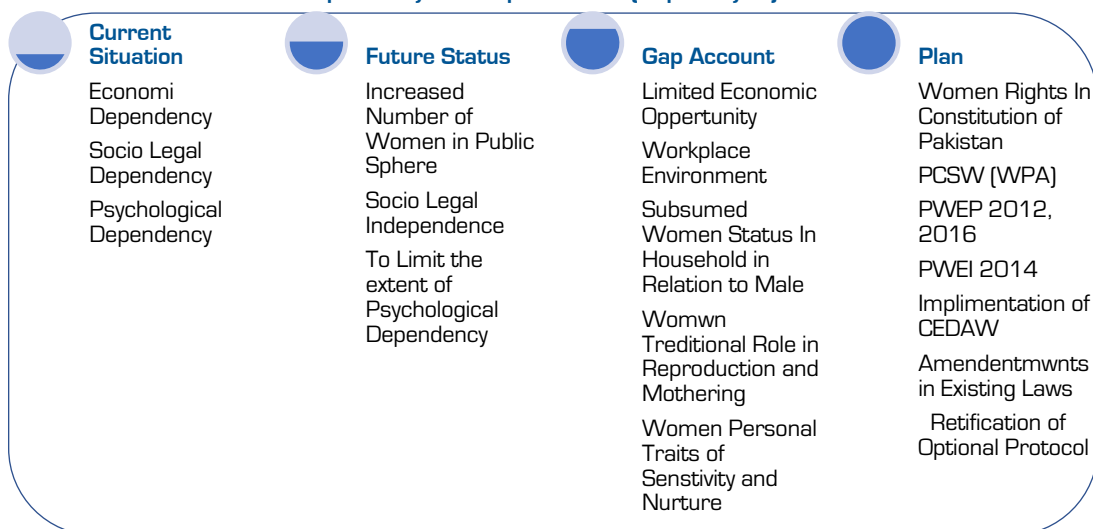


Figure 5: Gap Analysis of Gender Equality in Pakistan

The current situation of Pakistani women in public and private spheres is taken as a given scenario. Women's participation in economic activity that ensures women's economic empowerment is restricted by cultural taboos and considered a deviancy to patriarchal norms.

### Conclusion

Being Dependent means being in a subservient, subsumed status signifying that someone doesn't have an agency and is in need of an authority. The concepts of femininity, patriarchy and dependency are interlinked. In the patriarchal division of labor of industrial societies, women were assigned duties of CARE (for both home and family). These roles are considered to be the extension of her natural roles of reproduction and Mothering (Nurture). The functional division of labor and gendered differences of activities were intensified during the 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries, with the rise of industrial society. [\[Wollstonecraft 1967\]](#) Women figure they personified in her, different registers of dependency, i.e., socio-legal, political, economic. Second Wave feminism indicated another kind of dependency, which is psychological. Betty Friedman 1963 classic 'feminist mystique', indicated the psychological dependency of housewives. [\[Walters, 2006\]](#) The Psychologists identified psychological dependency of women as a disorder, i.e., DPD (Dependent

Personality Disorder), indicating women's hidden fear of independence or HER wish for a savior. [\[Dean, 2010, p. 77\]](#)

Dependency discourses construct a binary between an ideal, autonomous personality with a dependent, subsumed, and subjected persona. The personality mapping of male and female on dependent/ empowered dichotomy is the result of gendered segregation of roles of industrial society. [\[Nawaz, Gendered Discourses of State and Security in International Relations and Feminist Quest for an Alternative World Order December 2016\]](#)

The norms of transitional Asiatic states are different from mores of industrial western societies. This society, on course to modernity has to abandon the system where gender was a system of codependent relation with vague public-private binaries. Here women had dependent and subsumed status, but in hierarchical social order, every person was in subservient status to someone else, and dependence was not a disability. Modernization made women dependent on males on socio-legal, economic, political, and psychological registers, bringing to fore the concern of women's protection in most personal spheres of human life. [\[Dean 2010, 76\]](#)

The state feminism makes state participants in arena a custodian of women not only in the public

sphere to protect them from workplace harassments but protect their rights from male beings who are their close relatives. The role of the state is of significance that it can break women dependency on all registers and create equality between its male and female citizens. Furthermore as economic lag exists between genders, women need special attention.

The state of Pakistan, through its gendered machineries and Women Policy Agencies have taken steps to create equity. The actions of the Pakistani state are rooted in the teaching of Islam that grants women personal, economic, and social rights and treat women as sovereign beings responsible for their acts and wellbeing. [\(Murtaza 2017\)](#) [\(Moghadam 1994\)](#) Pakistani state steps towards the goals of gender equity are first steps to bring change in women's life. International commitment and treaty conditions proved significant to initiate the social legislation for women. Pakistan ratified the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 1996 but still not ratified the optional protocol of CEDAW that was institutionalized in the year 2000. Though Pakistan has taken necessary measures to save women in domestic as well as

public spheres yet the gap prevails between the intended and real scenarios as cultural taboos are rigid enough to make women psychologically dependent. Further, the flaws and loopholes of the legal system and judiciary favor perpetrators to gain time and mount social, economic, and psychological pressures on aggrieved. The situation of Pakistani women today resembles in many ways with the situation of 'Feminist mystique', where Print and electronic media glorify the image of ideal household women in contrast to autonomous, empowered career women, leading to tacit consent for cultural patterns; despite the fact that economic stresses and changing lifestyles demand women active participation in the public sphere. The Gendered machines in Pakistan must sort the strategy of narrative deployment through public awareness messages about institutions meant for women protection; and the creation of new empowered role models. Further, there is a need for reform in traditional legal structures that serve as barriers in ways of justice. The SDG 5 is categorized as the second priority of Pakistan. To attain the ideal of a just society, the state must reprioritize its goals in favor of gender equality.

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