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## **Social Exclusion of Women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Causes and Remedies**

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### **Abstract**

Social exclusion is a situation of society where an individual is denied to take part in different social activities. Social exclusion have three dimensions: economic, political and societal/cultural. Majority of women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially of rural areas have been facing social exclusion. They are deprived of many of their rights and limited to a marginalized section of society. This article aim to inquire into the causes of women's social exclusion in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and suggest remedies to it. The methodology of the study will be descriptive and analytical. Both primary and secondary data will be used.

Majority of women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa face hurdles in their social, political and economic life. They lagged behind in every field of life i.e. education, politics, economics and recreational activities. They are deprived of even to have access to health facilities. There are many factors involved in it which should be addressed to give females their due status in the society. For economic development of an area social inclusion of women is very important. Excluding almost half of the population from different economic, political and cultural activities is detrimental to stability and development of a society.

**Keywords:** Women, Social, Exclusion, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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**Introduction**

The inability of an individual to participate in their community is known as social exclusion, and it is believed that this phenomenon affects people on a variety of levels, including a social and political as well as material one. If someone is not involved in the major social activities of the community they reside in, they are considered socially excluded. (Abrams et al., 2007).

According to Levitas, 'The process of social exclusion is intricate and multifaceted. It involves being denied access to resources, rights, commodities, and services as well as the incapacity to engage in daily interactions and activities that are typically available to the vast majority of people in a society, whether such interactions take place in the political, social, cultural, or economic spheres. It impacts everyone's quality of life as well as the fairness and unity of society at large.' (Levitas, et.al, 2007)

Landman and Carvalho said if people are treated unfairly in the social, political, and economic spheres, social exclusion is a type of human rights violation. Additionally, a lack of human rights can make people more susceptible to marginalization. (Landman and Carvalho, 2010)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) civilization is no different from any other narrow-minded, male-centric nation, where the prevailing patriarchal structure rarely gives the other half of humanity a chance to develop and take up its own cause. As a result, such a trend gives rise to a culture that, in reality, holds women in low regard; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is a prime example.

Women's standing in several spheres of KP society is sufficient to recognize that social exclusion is a problem for them. Because of patriarchal sociocultural norms that ultimately deny access to development's benefits, women in KP do indeed endure seclusion and exclusion. The men perspective on women's roles is one of the primary factors impeding the empowerment and autonomy of women in KP.

Furthermore, women's weak social status in KP serves as a foundation for the discriminative political arena. Women in KP are limited in their ability to participate in politics by a variety of social challenges. Local traditions that are founded in social stigma, like the Pakhtun code of

conduct (Pakhtunwali) and its elements of Peghor (satire) and Tor (stigma), severely dissuade women from pursuing political empowerment. Islam forbids such sanctions against women, hence this practice of excluding them in many ways is strongly opposed to the religion.

The Pakistani constitution does not impose any limitations on women's political participation. However, because of structural and cultural barriers, their representation in municipal, provincial, and state level and in political parties and structures is still too minimal. In addition, women have experienced violence and intimidation across the nation for exercising their fundamental right to vote. (Bhattacharya, 2014).

### **The Position of Women in Pakhtun Society**

In Pakhtun society, women have practically little social influence. They work on household chores more of the time at home and engage in outdoor activities relatively seldom. For Pakhtuns, the most precious possession in life is their set of rules and values. In the Pakhtun social order, maintaining an approved pattern of rank and duty is imperative, and these principles have given rise to the distinctive concept of shame and honor. Gender norms are inflexibly adhered to with no way to break them.

In Pakhtun society, men determine a woman's position and role; generally speaking, a woman's role is restricted to managing her home. Less fortunate and marginalized, women experience low mobility, little education, restricted access to resources, poor health, inadequate nutrition, high death rates, and are subject to patriarchy and male dominance. (Alam, 2012).

### **Reasons for Women's Social Exclusion in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

The social marginalization of women in KP is caused by a number of factors. Finding the causes is crucial because it will enable you to get to the bottom of the problem and offer solutions that center on getting rid of its source.

## **1. Social Causes**

### **a. Social Norms, Patriarchy and General Mindset**

Women are socially excluded for a variety of reasons, including patriarchy, which is a major factor in our society and keeps women from engaging in important activities like attending college or running for office. Another social cause of social exclusion for women is men's refusal to let their wives participate in various institutions of society.

"I don't have the freedom to pursue my education because my brothers forbade it before we were married, and my husband forbids it now." (Khan, N. (Nazia) 2024).

Furthermore, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's uneducated societal standards and mindset must also be held accountable for the social marginalization of women in this region. Social norms prohibit women from engaging in specific activities because they believe that women should not go out since going out is necessary for education or employment.

"I am unable to participate in politics or cast a ballot because it is viewed as demeaning for women to go out." (Rahmat, 2023).

Furthermore, there is a widespread belief that women don't need politics, education, or other pursuits, and that it is not admirable for women to work or pursue higher education.

"The belief that women look better at home and should stay home to take care of household chores means I don't have the right to an education." (Gul, B. 2023).

"...it's all about the social and cultural norms that are so damaging to women that they prevent them from being included in or participating in social, political, or economic activities,". (Nighat, 2023)

"The primary causes of women's social exclusion in KP are opportunity gaps and patriarchy." (Kalsoom, 2024)

**b. Societal Misogyny**

The KP society's misogynistic beliefs also contribute to the exclusion of women from a many of fields. The same misogyny that causes discrimination against women also causes discrimination against men, which puts women at a disadvantage.

Men are viewed as superior to women in our misogynistic and patriarchal society, which is one of the causes behind women's social isolation in KP. (Bakhtawar, 2024)

**c. Pakhtun Culture**

The Pakhtun culture, which is prevalent throughout KP and places numerous limitations on women, is another factor contributing to the social marginalization of women. The prevalent limitation is that women are not allowed to leave the house, and if they do, it is an affront to the tenuous honor of Pakhtun men. This initial restriction is the main reason why Pakhtun women are subject to other penalties for even the most fundamental actions, including leaving the house to pursue an education. This restriction on staying at home prevents women from going to school, working, voting in elections and running for office, going to the doctor, exercising their right to mobility, and going to public places. In reality, confining Pakhtun women to home is just a denial of their right to mobility; as a result, losing this right can rob them of a lot of other rights.

Moreover, women are not allowed to participate in activities that are seen as belonging to men in Pakhtunwali, (the way of life of Pakhtuns). Given that they are seen as the personification of all social ills, Pakhtun culture is opposed to granting women many privileges, including the ability to move around and participate in politics. If women carry out any tasks associated with men, it is deemed an affront to their courage and dignity. This culture is largely responsible for Pakhtun women's exclusion from a number of settings.

**d. Application of Veil's Rigid Practices**

The parda/veil tradition and the prohibition on women to stay at home are related. Many women are kept at home and consequently remain outside of society by the strict Parda customs that are enforced because of the feudalistic aspects of Pakhtun society. It helps to force women to work

in environments where only women are employed, for instance. This discourages a lot of women from entering fields like politics and banking etc, for example, where they must deal with men.

“We are allowed to work only with women” (Rabia, 2023).

"In our family, women are not permitted to work alongside men or outdoors," thus I am unable to pursue a career in politics (Wahid, 2023).

This explains why women in KP are primarily offered opportunities to work in the educational field, particularly in the teaching sector, where they make up the majority of the workforce, but this is not the case in other fields.

“I don't have freedom to join politics because my parents don't like any other occupation except teaching” (Bushra, 2023).

Similarly, the imposition of inflexible Parda traditions prevents women from participating in coeducational education programs, depriving countless women of numerous excellent chances.

"Because fine arts are taught at Peshawar University, where coeducation is the only option, I was not permitted to study the subject of my choice, which is fine arts, due to coeducation." (Gulalay, 2023).

The way that Parda's strict customs are implemented is what intentionally prevents women from understanding the importance of their rights, such the ability to vote and enter the political sphere. In addition, the majority of women are not aware of how to register to vote and are consequently shut out of the political realm because they are kept within their homes and are rarely allowed to participate in political concerns.

**e. Thinking of Women as Insignificant and Unable**

In Puktun society, there is a mindset that views women as unimportant, which also makes their problems and feelings inconsequential. Many female-related concerns are disregarded at the state and home levels as a result of this approach. Additionally, because of this mindset, women's feelings are not valued, making them the object of illegal activity like domestic abuse and allowing their rights to be taken without hesitation.

Men seldom consider the emotional toll that depriving women of education, employment opportunities, or the freedom to walk outside or marry the person of their choice takes on women's sentiments because in these circumstances, women's feelings are seen as irrelevant. As a result, this mentality keeps women out of practically every situation. (Sumaira, 2023).

The same sort of thinking prevents women from using healthcare facilities because money isn't allocated to their well-being because their problems aren't seen to be important.

“...I will provide an example of health care within the framework of social marginalization. When a woman becomes ill, she is not permitted to visit the doctor in person. The family might contend that although they can receive treatment and medication at home, it is not necessary to transport them to the doctor or hospital or to spend money on their care, yet this is another example of social exclusion. (Maryam, 2023).

Women's exclusion from significant decision-making bodies and denial of opportunity are also results of a similar mindset that views them as inferior and unable.

"Our culture, conventions, and patriarchal, chauvinist society, where men are viewed as superior and can make decisions. Just like in Jirga, only men are allowed, not women. Thus, when we consider the people who make decisions at all levels of government down to the local level, we find very few, if any, women. It's also the reason why girls experience social exclusion because they aren't offered opportunity. The prevailing mindset in our society that women are incapable must be altered, first at the local level and subsequently at the state level. Then and only then can this mindset be altered." (Bano, 2023).

**f. Women as “Honour” and “Property” of Men**

Link the above mentioned ignorant social norms with the honour of men worsens the situation as men due to these norms don't let women participate in society as their participation demands leaving homes which is considered equivalent to undermining the honour of men.

“Because of honour I was not easily allowed to study as I am a woman so it is not deemed good for a woman to study. I had opportunity to get a government job but was not allowed” (Naveeda, 2023).

Men in KP consider women their property and thus, they attach their honour with their women's actions. Hence, as, women going out is deemed shameful and bad, so this action of women harms men's honour. Eventually, in order to save their honour, men restrict women from leaving home.

Moreover, one of the causes behind denying women the right to decide for themselves is that it is considered an insult to ask something from women even if it is about their own life because it is the fragile honour of men that don't let women decide about their lives themselves and hence, asking women about their decisions by men is considered attack on the men's honour.

Furthermore, it is the similar notion of considering women as men's property that allows men to decide for women. The practice of compensation marriage is one great example of this idea in which women are used as men's property who take their important decision of marriage.

“...in our Pakhtun Society, men have made things issue of their ego and honour plus they consider women their property” (Salma, 2024).

#### **g. Stereotyping Based on Gender**

A gender stereotype is an oversimplified belief about the characteristics or roles that men and women should and shouldn't have. One of the reasons for the social exclusion of women in KP is that women are not permitted to carry out certain jobs because they are seen as belonging to men, such as running for office, earning a living, and making decisions with authority.

“Patriarchy and gender stereotypes on gender roles are the primary reasons behind the social marginalization of women in KP and elsewhere. Women are not allowed to participate in some activities or social situations simply because of their gender. As we can see, men have been given the authority to make decisions on behalf of women, including when and to what age to marry, what kind of education to pursue, and what career path to take. Therefore patriarchy, male dominance, and gender stereotyping are the primary causes.” (Shah, 2023).



**h. Discrimination Based on Gender**

It's one of the causes of women's social exclusion in the KP, where women are marginalized in society due to their gender. The majority of female claimed that, simply because they are women, they do not have certain rights, although their brothers or male cousins do.

Due to their gender, women are not allowed to participate in several activities or social gatherings. (Shah, 2023).

Furthermore, gender inequality has been a contributing factor to poverty, especially in developing nations (Khan, N. [Naushad], 2018). Since poverty is a form of economic marginalization, gender inequality is also a source of women's social exclusion in KP.

**i. Less Knowledge and Awareness**

In KP, illiteracy, a poor quality of education, less awareness and ignorance are the major contributors to women's social marginalization. The negative effects of keeping women out of society are not well understood by the people in KP. Additionally, KP lacks a 100% literacy rate and high-quality education, which further misinforms the public and discourages action to improve the appalling conditions facing women. Thus, women's social isolation in KP is evident. In addition, a lack of education for women causes many of them to be ignorant of their rights, which leads to internalized chauvinism or opposition to women's rights in many cases because these women are also raised in the same patriarchal, misogynistic, and conservative cultures.

“There's a certain ignorance. In KP, poor education standards are another factor contributing to women's social marginalization.” (Salma, 2024).

**j. Denial of Opportunities in Social Sphere**

The lack of social possibilities for women in KP adds to their marginalization. For example, they are denied access to healthcare services and public spaces that would otherwise keep them out of the social sphere.

**k. Conservatism**

Most significantly, the conservative social structure of KP prevents women from participating in a variety of social organizations because it forces family elders to make decisions for everyone, which prevents women from making their own decisions.

"I am not permitted to enter public spaces due to the conservative family system" (Maimoona, 2023).

"Our elders decide everything, so I don't have the freedom to make my own decisions" (Gul, A. 2021).

**l. Orthodox Religious Affiliation and Orientation**

Women are likewise prohibited from participating in political matters due to men orthodox religious affiliation and orientation. The inexperienced and unyielding clerics contribute to the exclusion of women from the political sphere. Women are thus politically marginalized in KP. Applying it to other domains, mullahs in KP have a detrimental effect on women's engagement in society, as previously mentioned when the women's cycling rally in the KP was called off due to objections from the religious groups. (Sirajuddin, 2019).

**m. Stigmas in Society**

Social stigmas associated with the banking industry, politics, and many other fields restrict women from actively participating in these fields, including customer service positions. For instance, women are prohibited from joining political parties and running for office. Even if Pakistani politicians have made politics unattractive, this shouldn't deter women from pursuing careers in politics since changing individuals and institutions, rather than barring women from entering the political arena, is the answer.

Stigmas have been associated with the banking industry and customer service because of the concern that women may be harassed at banks or by callers to customer service. Nevertheless, excluding women from these environments is not the answer; rather, the answer lies in changing men, institutions, and laws while also making sure they are carried out. (Noor, 2023)

**n. Fear of Rape and Harassment**

In KP, women are not allowed to work alongside men in the workplace or enter public spaces by themselves because to concerns about harassment and sexual assault. 900 occurrences of sexual assault against women occurred in KP between 2015 and 2019, according to the 2020 report. Data shows that during these five years, the number of rape cases in the province has steadily increased (Gurmani, N. 2021). As a result, fear of rape and harassment grows along with the rise in sexual abuse of women in KP, further excluding women from society.

**2. Political Causes**

**a. Institutional Shortcomings**

The social marginalization of women in backward areas is caused by a number of political factors. Women's exclusion from the political realm is mostly due to institutional inadequacies. In KP, for instance, there are several institutional problems affecting women's voting rights. One of them is sending women to remote polling places; as a result, it is difficult for women to travel great distances to get to the polling places.

Furthermore, factors affecting women's exercise of their right to vote include the exhausting process of obtaining a Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC), the inadequate provision of facilities in polling places, including no female restrooms, shared polling stations with men.

Due to difficulties in women's registration processes, it become extremely inefficient, which has an impact on their ability to vote because many qualified candidates are unable to do so because they do not have a CNIC or registration. (Asma, 2023).

**b. Opportunities in the Political Sphere are denied**

Even though elected women are highly competent, those in positions of power do not allow women the opportunity to participate in various political institutions. This is demonstrated by the fact that no woman has ever been appointed to the KP cabinet. Furthermore, very few women received tickets to run for general seats in the 2024 election since political parties refrained from

offering their female members tickets for KP seats. Women are thus largely excluded from the political sphere as a result of opportunity restriction. (Ali, 2024).

**c. Lack of Representation for Women in Decision Making Bodies**

While the lack of women representation in decision-making bodies falls under the category of political exclusion, it also keeps women out of other institutions of society because it may be impossible for higher authorities to comprehend and address the concerns of women without the presence of women representatives.

"The underrepresentation of women in various committees and decision-making bodies is another factor. There is less representation of women in legislative or decision-making bodies. Even if women are represented to some extent in the system today, there are still certain issues (Bano, 2023).

**d. Lack of Policies that take Gender Equality into Account**

The lack of gender-sensitive policies in the province, if not the entire nation, is another political factor contributing to the social marginalization of women in KP. Women continue to experience discrimination at various societal levels in the absence of gender-sensitive legislation, which causes them to be marginalized.

"...we will never be able to empower women unless we have the gender-sensitive policy reforms" (Shah, 2023).

**e. Lack of Security for Women**

Social marginalization of women in KP is partly caused by the government's failure to protect them from illegal acts like sexual abuse and harassment. The fear of harassment and sexual assault is another reason why women are prohibited from going out of their own home or working in environments with a high concentration of male coworkers.

The key factors contributing to women's social exclusion in KP include patriarchy, opportunity gaps, and a lack of social and physical security, particularly in the form of harassment. (Kakakhel, 2023)

## **Impacts of Social Exclusion of Women in KP**

The effects are worth talking about since they will highlight how serious the issue of women's social marginalization in KP is. Additionally, they will contribute to raising awareness of the urgency with which this problem needs to be resolved. Furthermore, the social marginalization of women in KP affects not just women but the whole community. Additionally, the impacts highlight the different social, political, and economic issues that women face as a result of being marginalized.

### **1. Gender Disparity**

The disparity between men and women in social, political, intellectual, cultural, or economic accomplishments or attitudes is known as the gender gap. (Harris, 2017). One of the effects of women's social exclusion in KP is the gender gap, as women are either completely absent or present in these domains as minorities when they are kept out of the political, social, and economic realms. The data collected indicates that, in contrast to their brothers or male cousins, the majority of female are shut out of many fields.

"Yet boys in my family work as doctors and in other professions, but I don't have the right to work" (Sabila, 2023).

Women still make up the minority and men the majority, even in formal institutions. Thus, women, society, and the nation as a whole are severely impacted by all of this.

### **2. Underdevelopment of the Economy**

Research indicates that women's empowerment has a good effect on a nation's economy, and that social exclusion keeps women economically disempowered, which has an influence on any nation's economic development (Baten & Pleijt, 2022). Therefore, the social marginalization of women in KP has a detrimental impact on economic growth.

### **3. Threats to Health**

Due to their lack of access to healthcare, women who live in KP face significant health risks as a result of social isolation. The lack of appropriate medical facilities for women which has a

negative impact on their health. Especially after giving birth, they also have no access to medical care and to a healthy diet. In addition, women handle a lot of household activities during pregnancy and the postpartum period without adequate care at home, which has a detrimental effect on their health.

#### **4. Damaging Impacts on Mental Health**

The negative impact of social marginalization on women's mental health is also evident in KP. Working women in KP became psychologically disturbed due to the hostile behavior of their male counterparts and the exclusion of women from decision-making and career growth chances. Additionally, social isolation brought on by stigmatization or discrimination might impair mental health due to chronic stress and anxiety (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2023, September 7).

Women's sentiments are hurt by men or families who deny them the opportunity to further their education, find employment, marry the person of their choice, or participate in family decision-making. This causes psychological or emotional harm to women because it makes them feel insignificant, as these situations are perceived by the organizations that are excluding them. While many women might feel pressured in these kinds of situations, other women may eventually feel frustrated, angry, or cry (Nida, 2024). Therefore, women in KP may suffer psychological harm as a result of their social marginalization.

Females who experience mental health issues may also experience physical health issues (Brennan, et.al. 2021). Women's social marginalization in this province is therefore associated with significant health concerns.

#### **5. Lack of Knowledge and Awareness**

Women are not able to access educational opportunities or employment in certain fields due to social exclusion so they remain ignorant and illiterate. Women's social marginalization in KP is caused by both ignorance and illiteracy, but they both result from the same issue.

## **6. Unsatisfactory Living Circumstances**

Because they are largely unemployed and do not receive financial support from their spouses or dads, women in KP also endure difficult living conditions. In addition, they lack access to medical facilities. Their bad lifestyle, for instance, is a result of all of this; they experience poverty (Hira, 2024).

## **7. No time of leisure for Women to Relax**

Women cannot even relax or take the breaks they deserve in the middle of their hectic, demanding, or monotonous routines because they are denied access to public spaces where they can go and spend some free time.

## **8. Terrible Condition of People, Families, and Society**

When women aren't allowed to make their own decisions, they continue to feel angry and upset. Women eventually experience poor mental health, which has a terrible effect on their children, families, relationships, and ultimately society as a whole. One prime example is the situation of women in KP who were unable to get awareness and enlightenment which leads a disturbed existence that affects her children, relationships, and family (Nabila, 2023).

## **9. Impeding the Empowerment of Females**

The lack of mobility rights for females in KP is a major barrier to their empowerment in KP since it prevents them from being independent and reliant on others, particularly their men.

## **10. Law-Breaking**

Laws and regulations are broken as a result of social marginalization of women in KP, as was highlighted while discussing the lack of mobility for women. In addition, forced exclusion from every field is prohibited in Pakistani law that result from the social marginalization of women in KP.

**11. Women's Perspectives are absent from Electoral Politics**

Women's voices are suppressed when they are denied the right to vote because electoral politics, which determines government formation, does not give voice to their opinions. Women are still unable to use their thoughts to influence the formation of governments.

**12. Very Few Laws that Favor Women**

Because women are excluded from decision-making bodies, men make up the majority of decision-makers and legislators. This means that men may not fully comprehend women's issues, which is why women themselves are more qualified to create laws for especially in the patriarchal and misogynistic KP. As a result, it is likely that women-friendly policies will not be created.

**13. Lack of Representation for Women in the Decision-Making Bodies**

Women in KP are underrepresented in high positions since they are not allowed to participate in decision-making bodies. This is unfavorable for the women of the province.

**14. Women's Issues are Still Unaddressed.**

The inability of women from KP to participate in decision-making bodies results in a multitude of unresolved challenges for KP's women residents, as their women representatives lack the authority to address problems or make choices. Given that they were raised in a patriarchal and misogynistic environment and may not have empathy for the concerns of women, the male representatives are likely incapable of comprehending and resolving the challenges faced by women.

**15. Absence of Women's Leadership**

The KP's political exclusion of women prevents women from pursuing careers in politics, leading to a dearth of female leaders in the area, which is extremely detrimental to women.



**16. Assaults on Women**

In KP scored higher on the violence against women index. Rape, honor killing, domestic abuse, and other violent crimes against women are among them (Khan, I. 2020). In KP, women who experience exclusion attempt to resist it as well; as a result, men utilize violence as a means of retaliation when they rebel against their treatment. It poses a serious risk to the ladies in this province as a result. It is also interesting that this effect has some relationship to fear of harassment and rape, which is one of the factors contributing to women's social marginalization.

**17. Denial of Opportunities**

Even though opportunity denial is a condition and a cause of social exclusion, it also has an effect on it. Women are denied opportunities, for example, when they are kept out of politics by being refused representation in bodies that make decisions.

**18. Insufficient Resources**

It is not only the condition and reason for women's exclusion, but it also has an effect on women's segregation. One prime example of a lack of resources is when women are prohibited from working, as they eventually become unemployed and low on money.

**19. Unequal Participation**

Men and women participate in the political and social spheres differently when women are denied the right to vote or voice their opinions in family decision-making while men are allowed to do so.

**20. Unemployment**

In KP, unemployment is both the cause and the effect of women's social exclusion since it prevents women from receiving the education and chances they need to work and acquire new skills.

**21. Women aren't able to succeed in their careers**

Lack of possibilities for job growth prevents women from advancing in their careers, which eventually hurts them since they fall behind in the economic realm and are unable to reach the same accomplishments as their male counterparts.

**22. Poverty**

In the realm of exclusion, poverty is crucial since it affects not just the economic root but also the social exclusion of women in KP. It goes without saying that when women do not work and make an income, the men in the family bear the burden of paying for the requirements of the home, which they find difficult to do because they do not make enough money. A large number of people eventually fall below the poverty line since the income of one or two breadwinners is often lower and that of dependents higher. Therefore, 39 percent of KP residents live below the poverty level. Reference. (International Growth Center, 2015).

**Findings**

Due to rights violations and participation restrictions, women in KP are generally excluded from the social, political, and economic arenas, which contributes to their high level of social exclusion. Women in KP face exclusion in the economic sector due to lack of opportunities, denial of opportunities, lack of resources, poverty, lack of participation in property concerns, unemployment, and gender wage disparity. Women in KP are marginalized in the political sphere because they do not have equal access to opportunities. In the province, women are likewise underrepresented in politics.

Women are marginalized in society because they are not allowed to access public spaces, healthcare facilities, or educational arenas. In addition, their rights to mobility and self-determination are restricted. Women are not included in family decision-making, which is just one facet of societal exclusion. Even in this domain, many women do not have a voice. The social exclusion of women in KP causes numerous issues for both women and society at large in social, economic, and political domains, as listed below;

Women in particular face health risks in the social sphere, including mental health disorders, illiteracy, ignorance, poor living conditions, a lack of leisure time, lack of empowerment, violence against themselves, and an inability to find solutions to their problems. Meanwhile, society as a whole struggles with the gender gap and the terrible state of individuals and families, which has a debilitating effect on society as a whole.

While society as a whole struggles with poverty and economic underdevelopment, women in particular suffer issues in the economic sphere, such as unemployment, the inability to advance in their careers, and a lack of resources.

Women have specific challenges in the political sphere, such as the lack of representation for women in decision-making bodies, the absence of women leaders, the dearth of women voices in electoral politics, and a general lack of legislation that are friendly to women.

In addition, women generally experience opportunity denial, and unequal participation is a widespread problem that emerges in society as a result of women's social exclusion. Thus, the theory that the social marginalization of women causes a variety of issues for women in particular and society at large has been validated. These issues arise in the social, economic, and political spheres.

Due to its widespread effects, the issue of women's social exclusion affects not only women but also the entire community. Since women make up a large portion of the population in KP, this is a problem that affects them. As a result, when a problem impacts a large number of people, it naturally affects the rest of society. Furthermore, political, social, and economic factors such as institutional weaknesses, patriarchy, poverty, etc. are recognized as the root causes of this problem.

Finally, because several of the states, causes, and effects of women's social exclusion in KP are so similar, this research has also revealed an extremely intriguing connection between them.

## **Conclusion**

The Ideology –

“No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you. We are victims of evil customs. It is a crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of the houses as prisoners. There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live.” Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Father of the Nation. (The Express Tribune, 2020, December 25)

The Reality –

“Pakistan was made only for the powerful and for the men. It was not made for weak and poor women like me. What are we worth and what is our status here nothing at all”. Basheeran Bibi, one of the numerous female victims of violence in Pakistan. (Bhattacharya, 2014).

## **Recommendations**

In KP, social exclusion is a complex topic that affects women. But there is always hope, therefore following careful research and analysis, the following suggestions aim to counteract the social marginalization of women in KP. (Bano, 2023). Females’ social exclusion affects all sectors and population of KP, not just women, individuals, institutions, and organizations. Leaders of the province must tackle this issue seriously and eradicate it from its roots.

The first step is to recognize and evaluate the reasons for KP's women social exclusion. In order to integrate women into Pakhtun society, certain cultural modifications must also be made. Government initiatives and awareness campaigns are two ways that these changes can be implemented.

"We must transform Pakhtun culture by bringing it to a state when it will be more refined and encouraged the social inclusion of women. Cultural festivals and the development of KP literature are necessary to achieve this. The government and non-governmental organizations, as well as the media, must work in promoting the authentic KP’s culture. Youth must be involved in activities that inspire positive behavior throughout society.

KP need recreational and educational opportunities where its residents can exhibit their talents. For the sake of moral, ethical, and mental well-being, religious principles must upheld. In order to make the people of KP to become responsible citizens, we must advance citizen laws. All incorrect, legalized acts of ignorance and patriarchy that are destroying our society like cancer must be strongly discouraged; this includes all taboos (Kakakhel, 2023).

In order to ensure women's inclusion, decision-making authority should be granted to them at the national, corporate, and local levels. Appropriate policies and their execution by the accountable agencies can accomplish this.

"It is crucial to include women in various decision-making groups, such as the Board of Directors and Governors, if we want to see them included in society. Giving equal representation is crucial institutions and decision making bodies (Bano, 2023).

There are numerous ways for women to feel socially included. First ability must be granted to females to make choices and decisions. Females could not ever achieve anything in life if the freedom of making decisions are not granted to them in their homes, which is actually a very basic institution. However, if we are not giving them options, such as where they want to get their education, what subjects they want to study, what type of job they want to do, then they could ever not achieve anything (Shah, 2023). Allowing women to make decisions at home will undoubtedly help them integrate into all spheres of society, as women are largely excluded from home decision making due to constraints.

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