**What is the Gender Gap**

The gender gap is the difference between women and men as reflected in social, political, intellectual, cultural, or economic attainments or attitudes. The [Global Gender Gap Index](http://wef.ch/gendergap17) aims to measure this gap in four key areas: health, education, economics and politics.

So the gap in economics, for example, is the difference between men and women when it comes to salaries, the number of leaders and participation in the workplace.

Education encompasses access to basic and higher levels of education, while health looks at life expectancy and politics examines the difference between how men and women are represented within decision-making organizations.

**What is the Gender Gap?**

Although we've come a long way addressing inequality between men and women, it still persists today. The **gender gap** shows us how unequal access to opportunities maintains inequality between the sexes. There are a number of different ways we can think about the gender gap. Let's talk about some of the areas where we still have some work to do in addressing this inequality between men and women.

**Inequality in Opportunity**

**Pay Gap**

When we think about the gender gap, one of the things that probably immediately comes to mind is the pay gap, which refers to the difference in wages and salaries between men and women. On average, women make about 80 percent of what men do. There are also racial disparities.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

It's not just pay that's unequal, though. It's also the type of jobs that women do. According to researchers at Stanford, only about 2% of executives at major corporations are women. And, at 48% of Fortune 1000 companies — the largest 1000 companies in the US ranked by revenue — there aren't any women executives at all.

**Education**

One bit of good news is in education. In the past, women were much less likely to obtain higher education than men. But recently, that has been changing. We now see women surpassing men in terms of educational attainment. In fact, about 57% of college students are now women. But this picture is a little bit more complicated.

**Political Power**

The political sphere shows inequality between men and women diminishing in some ways. For example, the United Nations reports that, globally, the number of women who hold political office has doubled compared to twenty years ago. But there are still disparities. In the U.S., women make up only 20% of congress. But even though the number of female leaders has doubled, women still only make up 22% of parliament members.

**Women in the Global Economy**

Women also have less access to formal financial tools, like bank accounts — the United Nations found that 55% of men have a formal bank account while only 47% of women do. In terms of work, only about 24% of senior management roles across the globe are held by women — in fact, women are much more likely to work in low-paying jobs in the informal sector. Sometimes there are legal obstacles, as well. The UN reports that in some countries, women are legally prevented from accepting some kinds of jobs, and in some places, a husband can deny his wife the opportunity to work.

**Causes of the Gender Gap**

There are a number of different explanations for the persistence of the gender gap and, in general, they fall into two broad categories: structural explanations and merit-based explanations.

In the past, Pakistan was put under pressure by the international community to address [gender inequality.](https://www.dw.com/en/pakistani-women-continue-to-fight-gender-inequality/a-16264593) In 1979, Pakistan established the Ministry for Women's Development in response to recommendations from the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

This ministry facilitated women's access to education, health, legal services and ensured their placement in provincial and national legislatures. It also set up services like credit facilities for women, study and computer centers, child care and hostels for working women.

**Nothing but good intentions**

These steps indeed helped women, but because of the patriarchal nature of the society and religious backlash, they never became a normal part of Pakistan's social structure and political system.

Even when Pakistan had a female chief executive, Pakistan's women never felt that they had a representative in the prime minister's house. And after the dissolution of the Ministry for Women's Development in 2010, these initiatives were left at the mercy of provincial governments.

**Taking the gender gap seriously**

Shahida Jameel was the first woman to be appointed as the Federal Minister of Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs of Pakistan. She said that nobody in Pakistan has ever taken the issue of gender disparity seriously, including the former prime minister, and first female leader of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto.

no women besides the late Nusrat Bhutto and the late Benazir Bhutto were allowed to be mainstream members of their party," said Jameel. "All the other women were limited to the women's wing and were not allowed to occupy mainstream membership,

**Pakistani Women in Science and Technology**

Equal participation of men and women in scientific research drives innovation and strengthens the economy. It is believed that diversity in science can bring together people with unique backgrounds. There is a significant role of science in society, for peace and development and the need to engage the wider public in debates on emerging scientific issues is the need of the hour. The need is to promote research partnerships with equitable gender representation and underline the importance and relevance of science in our daily lives.

Gender equality and parity in science is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Keeping women away from the revolutionary scientific fields of 21st century will greatly hamper the development at global level. It is believed that untapped potential of women in areas such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) may weaken the innovation potential of a society.

Pakistan is a developing country that is striving to accelerate its economic growth and catch up with the pace of the fast growing economies of the region. Women are about 48.5 % of Pakistan’s total population. Despite constituting almost half of the population, women are an underutilized talent. Women have remained somewhat under-represented in most disciplines of science and technology, and furthermore, are not well-represented at the most senior levels in all disciplines. The job options for women remain limited to agriculture, services (domestic) and small-scale industries.

For achieving national development it is an economic necessity to utilize their talents to the full at all levels of scientific and technological education, training and employment. The low socio-economic status of women in Pakistan is beginning to be recognized as a potentially significant drag on the country’s growth.

No doubt, women are growing in numbers in the traditional male professions such as engineering, law, medicine, business, the police and the military. Women's ranks have also grown in the nation's entertainment, news and mass media and they are much freer than ever to express themselves in the choice of appearance, speech, clothing, arts, entertainment etc. A number of women have moved up into the executive positions. Women now make up 4.6% of board members of Pakistani companies

According to UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015, 37% of female researchers belong to the medical sciences, 33.8% of female researchers in Pakistan belong to natural sciences, 15.4% belong to engineering and technology, 11% belong to the agricultural sciences while 39.9% belong to the social sciences and humanities. According to the Pakistan Education Statistics, 2015-16 by AEPAM, the Gross Enrollment Ratio of females in primary and secondary education has increased from the previous years

According to PCST R&D Surveys 2013-14, the number of female researchers (headcount) by field of science and sector of employment has increased from the previous years. Similarly, according to Higher Education Commission Annual Report 2013-14, the enrolment of females in Universities is on the rise.

Realizing the widening gender gap and the obscured status of women in socio-economic development, especially focusing on the gender dimension of science and technology, Pakistan Council for Science & Technology (PCST) has taken a lead to foster women in scientific community and to improve visibility of women scientists by maintaining a website and starting a project on collecting data on statistics of women representation in science and technology

The data and materials provided here relate to ***Gender Education, Women Empolyment, Women in Science, Women in Health and Women Empowerment.*** The data would hopefully serve as a reference material for the scientific community and for the professionals working in the field of women’s empowerment, as well.