

A STUDY OF THE CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS FACED BY SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN COMPARED TO THE OTHER REGIONS

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Abstract

According to HDSA (1997), South Asia is the world's most destitute region since it is extremely populated, heavily dependent on agriculture with low incomes. Gender inequality persists across the board in South Asian nations because of patriarchal social norms and attitudes. The region is also recognized as a "patriarch belt" (Caldwell, 1982), where men and women have different social statuses according to their kinship relationships. In contrast to the women in European countries, South Asian women are more concerned about personal needs than social needs. Accordingly, the main problem of this research is to identify the challenges and limitations faced by South Asian women compared to the other regions. The main objective of this research was to find out the main challenges and limitations faced by South Asian women compared to other regions. Moreover, the sub-objective was to identify measures that can be taken to prevent the challenges and limitations faced by South Asian women. The conceptual framework was developed using literature reviews, research articles, e-books, journals, printed materials and relevant websites as secondary data collection methods to interpret the findings. According to those secondary sources, six main challenges and limitations faced by South Asian women compared to the other regions were found ; challenges in education sector, challenges in marriage institution, challenges in media and technology, limited access to health care, limitations in political institution, challenges in profession; gender pay gap, sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination. To overcome all these challenges and limitations faced by South Asian women, everyone should work to ensure women are safe while educating all girls and women in decision-making independently. Adopting these measures can solve the problems and ensure that South Asian women are no longer prejudiced on the basis of their gender.

Keywords: Challenges, Limitations, Patriarchal, South Asia, Women

Introduction

According to HDSA (1997), South Asia is the world's most destitute region since it is extremely populated, heavily dependent on agriculture and has low incomes.. The physical, societal and geographic characteristics of this area make it distinct from other regions. South Asian countries include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and all these countries are members of

SAARC. One and a half billion people, who come from a variety of ethnic and cultural groupings, make up the densely populated region of South Asia. Moreover, South Asian countries have a wide variety of art forms, cuisines, religions, dialects, and belief systems, making them incredibly diverse culturally.

One of the world's major geographical regions is “South Asia”. Because of its unique physical,

societal, geographic characteristics and this area is recognized as a particular region. Its geographical boundaries are comparatively distinct. Mountain ranges divide it from the rest of Asia: Hindukush to the west, and the highest mountains in the world, the Himalayas and Karakoram to the north. There are over 1.5 billion people living in South Asia, who come from a diverse spectrum of ethnic and cultural groupings. South Asia is encircled to the west and south by the Indian Ocean. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka are all South Asian countries and they are considered as SAARC members. Among them, India in particular is the biggest country in South Asia and it includes 63% of South Asia's land area and 74% of its population.

Gender inequality persists across the board in South Asian countries, because of patriarchal social norms and attitudes. The region is also recognized as a "patriarchal belt" (Caldwell, 1982), where men and women have different social statuses according to their kinship relationships. Discrimination based on sex or gender that results in one sex or gender being consistently given preference or priority over another is known as gender inequality. Gender norms and stereotypes reinforce gendered identities and constrain the behaviour of women and men in ways that lead to inequality (Ridgeway, 2011). It is a complicated issue with many facets that affects people's lives all around the world in different ways. Gender inequality, which has its roots in historical and cultural conceptions, is still present in social, economic, and political domains and manifests itself in both overt and covert ways.

Gender inequality has centuries-old roots that are firmly embedded in cultural norms and institutional structures. More women than males live their lives primarily at home. They frequently experience greater exclusion from

society as a whole. Persisting in financial inequality and impeding women's economic independence, the gender pay gap is a critical issue that is exacerbated by discriminatory practices and stereotypes (World Economic Forum, 2020). In contrast to the women in European countries, South Asian women are more concerned about personal needs than social needs. Accordingly, the main problem of this research article is to identify the challenges and limitations faced by South Asian women compared to the other regions. The main objective was to find out the main challenges and limitations faced by South Asian women compared to other regions. Moreover, the sub-objective was to identify measures that can be taken to prevent the challenges and limitations faced by South Asian women. Throughout history, women have frequently been reduced to subservient positions and had their contributions disregarded. The concept that males should be the main providers of income and decision-makers and that women should take care of the home and family has been reinforced by traditional gender roles. The persistence of gender gaps can be attributed to the way that society has formed expectations based on historical standards. The differences between sexes are exhibited in the attainment of education and professional jobs, ownership of assets, the feminization of poverty and these differences increase the risk of violence towards women. (World Health Organization. Promoting gender equality to prevent violence against women. World Health Organization. 2009)

Literature Review

Several academics have put forth theoretical frameworks for analyzing and elucidating gender disparity. Social constructionist theories emphasize the role of societal norms and expectations in shaping gender roles (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Intersectionality, introduced by Crenshaw (1989), explores the

interconnectedness of various social categories, such as gender, race, and class, to understand the unique experiences of individuals facing multiple forms of discrimination. Research on gender inequality frequently delves into economic disparities between men and women. The gender pay gap has been a persistent concern, with studies investigating the contributing factors, including occupational segregation, discrimination, and negotiation dynamics (England, 2010).

Research also highlights the impact of gender inequality on women's career progression, entrepreneurship, and access to economic resources (Budig, 2018). The impact of cultural and societal factors on gender inequality is a recurrent theme in the literature. Researchers investigate how cultural norms, stereotypes, and traditional gender roles contribute to the perpetuation of inequality. The intersection of gender with other social identities, such as race, ethnicity, and sexuality, further complicates the dynamics of societal influences (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004).

Galor and Weil (1996) point out, that men have lost some of the rewards for their comparative advantage in physical strength as the societies have grown to be more capital and knowledge-based since the 19th century. They explain the increase in women's relative wages by developing a model where women and men have equal quantities of brains, but men have more brawn. In a more developed economy, the rewards of brains relative to brawn are higher. Ryan Barclays (2010) indicates that gender inequality is an essential issue in development and gender mainstreaming. Previously, gender inequality was a concern for human rights. Currently, it is a major alarm of economic necessity. According to Minguez (2012) the idea of productivity welfare country that are the basis of social policy in developed countries were

consequently crafted to favor gender equality, however, virtually on economic terms only. These include increase of salaries to same level irrespective of the gender of the employee, labor amalgamation, and monetary assistance among others. Gender inequality means that women are dependent on working men for financial support, as they are unable to contribute to economic progress. Although economic development does not fundamentally reduce the gap in income between genders, it does bring about social changes that are linked to these changes in women's lives. The advances also don't increase the financial independence of women. Gender gaps in social circles are fundamentally strengthened and enhanced by these shifts in economic growth and structural transformation. (Minguez, 2012).

Research Methodology

In the dedicated pursuit of academic inquiry, a sophisticated research methodology was meticulously applied to aggregate secondary data utilizing a qualitative research framework. The methodology of this research focuses on a thorough literature review and secondary data source analysis to examine the obstacles and constraints that South Asian women confront in comparison to women in other countries. The conceptual framework was developed using literature reviews, research articles, e-books, journals, printed materials and relevant websites as secondary data collection methods to interpret the findings.

This methodology makes it possible to systematically compare the obstacles and constraints South Asian women encounter to those of other countries. It includes gathering data at a certain moment in time to provide an instantaneous picture of the state of affairs. The study outcomes that were carefully chosen from online platforms were included in the final comprehensive compilation of secondary data,

which improved the depth and scope of the research findings.

Results

Gender is usually understood in terms of masculinity and femininity in most countries. Alpha males are typically found at the extremities of the continuum. A area renowned for its historical significance and rich cultural diversity, South Asia is also home to a plethora of obstacles and limits that disproportionately impact women. Although there has been development in many areas, South Asian women still face particular challenges that distinguish them from their counterparts in other areas.

Basically, six main challenges and limitations faced by South Asian women compared to the other regions were found ; challenges in education sector, challenges in marriage institution, challenges in media and technology, limited access to health care, limitations in political institution, challenges in profession; gender pay gap, sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination. They can be identified as follows;

Challenges faced by South Asian Women in Education sector

The field of “education” is essential in determining how people and civilizations will develop in the future. Nevertheless, there are a lot of obstacles that South Asian women frequently have to overcome in order to get a good education and have more chances to advance both personally and professionally. Due to socioeconomic issues, cultural restrictions, and geographic limitations, South Asian women frequently encounter obstacles when trying to acquire school. Girls may have to go far to school in remote locations, and families may place a higher priority on their male children's education than their female children. As a consequence, there is a gender disparity in educational achievement and literacy rates. When

considering the literacy rate in South Asian countries, according to UNESCO in 2018, Sri Lankan male literacy rate is about 92.77% and female literacy rate is about 90.8%. Due to a shortage of transportation, poor infrastructure, and social pressures, girls in rural Pakistan and India frequently drop out of school, which feeds a cycle of limited educational options for women. It has been more than 20 years since women and girls are not allowed to attend primary education or secondary schools in Afghanistan.

The persistence of gender-based discrimination and bias in many South Asian countries has an impact on women's experiences in educational institutions. Traditional roles for women are frequently dictated by stereotypes and cultural expectations, which undermines their pursuit of different educational and career pathways. Gender norms are strongly ingrained in Bangladesh, where girls may be discouraged from pursuing STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) professions, which would limit their opportunities for future employment in these in-demand fields. For South Asian women, being married young still poses a serious obstacle to finishing their education. Girls' education is frequently prioritized over marriage by society, which limits their opportunity for personal growth and results in a high dropout rate. Afghan cultural conventions sometimes force families to marry off their girls at an early age, depriving them of the opportunity to finish school and follow their dreams. South Asian women are discouraged from visualizing varied professional pathways due to the lack of female role models and mentors in many sectors. In the absence of direction and assistance, individuals could find it difficult to handle the intricacies of academic and occupational settings. Young girls may not have role models in industries like business and politics in Sri Lanka, where women are underrepresented in leadership positions. This could limit their

ambitions and confidence in pursuing non-traditional jobs.

The inability of South Asian women to obtain comprehensive reproductive health education may impede their capacity to make well-informed decisions regarding family planning and health. Due to early pregnancies brought on by this ignorance, young girls may be forced to drop out of school. Teenage girls in countries like Nepal, India, and Sri Lanka, where there is frequently a lack of reproductive health information, may become pregnant unintentionally, which could interfere with their educational paths and prolong cycles of poverty. A multifaceted strategy combining governments, communities, and international organizations is needed to address the difficulties South Asian women confront in the field of education. To create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment, it is imperative to empower women through increased educational opportunities, the demolition of gender-based stereotypes, and the provision of mentorship and role models. Through acknowledging and tackling these obstacles, nations in South Asia may unleash the complete potential of their female populace, promoting social and economic advancement for future generations.

Challenges faced by South Asian Women in Marriage institution

In South Asian societies, “marriage” holds great cultural significance and is well ingrained in social conventions and cultural customs. The institution of marriage presents unique obstacles for South Asian women, even though it can be a source of support and companionship. Despite being a long-standing custom in many South Asian communities, arranged marriages might present difficulties for women's agency and autonomy when selecting their life partners. Family expectations and social pressures frequently take center stage in these situations,

giving women little influence over one of the most important decisions of their life. In certain regions of India and Pakistan, young women may be forced into arranged marriages without having their personal preferences sufficiently taken into account, which could result in awkward matches and strained relationships. In the sake of honour and reputation, the majority of women in rural communities are also murdered by their own families.

Traditional gender norms are frequently upheld in South Asian societies, where women are expected to perform particular tasks around the house. These expectations may restrict women's chances for both professional and personal development, creating a culture in which women's identity is primarily defined by their roles as spouses and parents. Women may encounter social pressures to put family responsibilities ahead of professional pursuits or personal goals in Bangladesh, a country with strongly embedded conventional gender norms. South Asian women sometimes struggle with being financially dependent on their marriages, especially when they are not supported or given the opportunity to pursue higher education and professional prospects. In the event of marital disagreement or economic distress, this financial dependence may put one at risk. In Nepal, women may become financially reliant on their husbands due to limited access to education and work possibilities, which makes it difficult for them to assert their independence when making decisions. The Covid-19 pandemic has revealed that risk factors for violence against women and girls. In South Asia 37% of women have experienced violence at the hands of their intimate partners.

One of the biggest obstacles for women looking to leave violent or unhappy marriages is the stigma attached to divorce in South Asian countries. Women are frequently forced into

marriages that may be harmful to their mental and physical health because cultural standards place a higher value on maintaining family honour than on their personal happiness. Women in Sri Lanka may choose to stay in difficult marriages despite violence or dissatisfaction in order to hide from society's taboo against divorce. In certain South Asian nations, women who are married may not have enough protection under the law, particularly when it comes to property rights, domestic abuse, and marital rape. Women are more susceptible to exploitation and abuse when there are no legal protections in place. Domestic abuse cases in Afghanistan may remain unresolved because of insufficient legal protections and enforcement, a country where laws protecting women are still developing. Moreover, in Bangladesh, India and Nepal, attacks on women with acid have become more common.

A comprehensive grasp of cultural factors and a dedication to promoting greater gender equality are necessary to address the obstacles that South Asian women encounter in marriage. South Asian societies can strive to make the institution of marriage a more welcoming and encouraging place for women by questioning long-standing conventions, encouraging women's education and economic development, and strengthening legal protections. Not only is it vital for women's personal empowerment but it also advances the region's larger objectives of gender equality and societal advancement.

Limitations faced by South Asian Women in Political Institutions

“Political institutions” are essential in determining how a society is governed and how its members are represented. Nonetheless, women in South Asia still encounter severe barriers in these establishments, which impedes their ability to participate and be represented effectively. Despite the vast cultural diversity of

South Asia, women have historically and culturally been marginalized. Women's ability to fully participate in political institutions is restricted by patriarchal frameworks and traditional gender norms. Women's complete integration into political processes remains impeded by firmly set social conventions, notwithstanding recent advancements. The underrepresentation of South Asian women in positions of decision-making in political institutions is one obvious barrier for them. Women find it difficult to assume leadership positions at the local and national levels in many of the region's nations. For example, in India, despite the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution providing seats for women in local governing bodies, male leaders still frequently hold the majority of the decision-making authority. In India, women representation in the parliament is 15.1% and in Sri Lanka, women representation in the parliament is 5.3%. But, in 2023 United Kingdom, women representation in the parliament is 34.5% in lower house and 29% in upper house.

In the political sphere, South Asian women are often subjected to discrimination and cultural stereotypes that damage their reputation. Potential female leaders are discouraged from entering politics by persistent stereotypes about women being less capable or emotionally unstable. This is especially true in Bangladesh, where cultural norms frequently force women into home roles that impede their ability to pursue political goals. South Asian women frequently encounter barriers to obtaining high-quality education, despite the fact that education is a potent weapon for empowerment. It is more difficult for them to actively engage in political discourse due to this lack of educational options. Decades of conflict have harmed girls' access to education disproportionately in Afghanistan, for example, which has reduced the number of

educated women who can make meaningful contributions to political institutions.

Politicians who are South Asian women are likewise susceptible to verbal and physical harassment. Incidents of violence and harassment discourage women from entering the political sphere. Benazir Bhutto and other prominent Pakistani women politicians have been the targets of threats and acts of violence, underscoring the dangerous terrain that women must frequently traverse in their quest for political positions. Although some South Asian nations have enacted gender quotas in an effort to remedy the underrepresentation of women, it is still difficult to put these policies into practice effectively. In Nepal, for example, women's real representation and influence in decision-making processes remain limited, even in spite of a legislative provision requiring a minimum percentage of women in various government organizations. Taliban's in Afghanistan women hold no cabinet positions in the their country which has also abolished the ministry of women's affairs.

The historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors that South Asian women encounter inside political institutions are firmly ingrained. A multimodal strategy involving legislative changes, educational programmes, and cultural transformations is needed to address these issues. South Asian nations can unleash the potential of their female populace and create inclusive, representative political structures that accurately reflect the diversity of their cultures by tearing down these impediments. South Asian women are unable to overcome these obstacles and make a significant political contribution to the region unless they work together.

Challenges faced by South Asian Women in the Profession

In South Asia, the workplace is full with many obstacles that impede women's advancement and representation since they disproportionately harm them. HDSA reported in 2000 that observations made at the time indicated that South Asian women labour 2–4 hours more than men, or 10–12 hours a day. In this article, the three interrelated issues of pregnancy discrimination, sexual harassment, and the gender wage gap are examined as they affect South Asian women in the workplace. Cultural, societal, and institutional norms play a major role in the intersectional challenges that South Asian women encounter in their professional endeavours.

Gender Wage Gap:

In South Asia, the gender wage gap is still a major problem that reflects deeply embedded workplace gender biases. For example, research conducted in India repeatedly show that men and women performing equivalent occupations earn significantly different amounts of money. For instance: According to a poll done in 2021, women in the Indian IT sector make, on average, 26% less than men, even when they hold equal positions and have comparable degrees. As a result, women are not paid equally for their labour as men are.

Sexual Harassment:

In the workplace, sexual harassment is a serious problem that discourages women from pursuing their careers to the fullest extent possible. Power disparities and patriarchal traditions in South Asia aggravate this problem, making it challenging for women to report occurrences without worrying about reprisals. The majority of women who experience both sexual and non-sexual harassment at work. The harassment that these situations involved could be physical, verbal, visual, or nonverbal. According to an Indian study on women in the workplace, 35 percent of full-time working women have been

the victims of sexual harassment or exploitation. As more women came forward to speak about their experiences of sexual harassment in a variety of settings, including the media and academia, the #MeToo campaign gained traction in Pakistan.

Pregnancy Discrimination:

For South Asian women in the workforce, pregnancy discrimination continues to be a major obstacle. Pregnant workers' professional marginalization is exacerbated by maternity leave regulations that are insufficient and societal expectations that place a premium on women serving as careers. For instance, although though maternity leave is constitutionally protected in Sri Lanka, many women report experiencing subtle kinds of discrimination when returning to work following their leave, such as being passed over for promotions or given less difficult jobs. Accordingly, it is essential to identify and address pregnancy discrimination in order to protect women from being punished for balancing their obligations to their families and careers. South Asian societies may fully utilize the potential of their female workforce and create open and equal professional environments by tearing down these barriers. South Asian women can only overcome these obstacles and make significant contributions to the growth of their different societies by working together.

Challenges faced by South Asian Women in Healthcare sector

It is a fundamental right for all people to have access to high-quality healthcare, but South Asian women face particular difficulties in getting the care they need. South Asian women's healthcare is complicated due to a combination of cultural norms, socioeconomic circumstances, and gender inequities. Access to prenatal and postnatal care for women is impacted by persistent gaps in maternal healthcare that exist in many South Asian nations. Low educational

attainment, sociocultural variables, and insufficient healthcare infrastructure are frequently associated with high incidence of maternal death. limited access to health services leading to an estimated 11,000 mothers mortality and morbidity during the 1st wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Women in rural areas of Bangladesh experience difficulties in getting timely and effective prenatal and postnatal care, as maternal healthcare may be impeded by geographical constraints and limited resources. Women's health and family planning issues are exacerbated by a lack of thorough reproductive health education. Cultural taboos and traditional social standards frequently obstruct candid conversations regarding reproductive health, depriving women of information regarding sexual and contraceptive health. Lack of reproductive health information in Pakistani conservative groups might result in unwanted pregnancies and little family planning options. The mental health of South Asian women may be adversely affected by the increased prevalence of gender-based violence. The stigma associated with mental health disorders and the dearth of mental health resources exacerbate the difficulties faced by women who have experienced abuse and trauma. Due to social stigmas and a dearth of easily accessible mental health resources, women in India, a country with a high rate of domestic abuse, may face obstacles when attempting to seek mental health assistance. In South Asia, the prevalence of non-communicable diseases like diabetes and heart problems is rising. Due to a lack of knowledge and socioeconomic constraints, women's long-term health outcomes are impacted by delayed diagnosis and treatment. Lack of knowledge about preventative healthcare practices and restricted access to inexpensive treatment could be contributing factors to the rising incidence of non-communicable diseases in Sri Lanka's cities.

Due to insufficient access to medical services, South Asian rural areas frequently experience problems with their healthcare infrastructure. The health of women in India is impacted by a number of issues, including depression, anxiety, and early childbirth. The lack of access to healthcare facilities may impede women's ability to get timely and necessary medical care in these areas. Women may have to travel far to receive medical care in isolated areas of Nepal where there may not be enough healthcare facilities, delaying treatments and raising health risks.

A comprehensive strategy that takes into account cultural sensitivity, enhances healthcare infrastructure, and advances gender equality is required to address the healthcare issues that South Asian women face. South Asian nations can strive to make sure that women obtain the healthcare they require for their general well-being by making investments in reproductive health education, growing mental health services, and improving accessibility to healthcare facilities. In addition to being vital for women's personal health, women's empowerment in the healthcare industry advances the region's larger objectives of public health and socioeconomic advancement.

Challenges faced by South Asian Women in Media and Technology

Globally, societies have changed due to the quick development of media and technology, which brings both benefits and challenges. However, there are unique barriers that South Asian women must overcome in order to use and engage with the digital world. Due to their limited access to technology and the internet, South Asian women continue to face major challenges as a result of the digital gender barrier. Women's participation in the digital world is impeded by unequal access to smartphones, computers, and the internet, which exacerbates already-existing socioeconomic disadvantages. Women may have

restricted access to computers or smartphones in rural India, where infrastructure is sometimes insufficient. This limits their ability to participate in online education, entrepreneurship, or information-sharing platforms.

South Asian women are discouraged from fully participating in digital areas since they are often the targets of cyberbullying and online harassment. Women's safety and wellbeing are seriously threatened by gender-based violence on the internet, such as revenge porn and stalking. Many women are discouraged from openly expressing themselves on social media sites due to reports of online harassment targeting them in Pakistan and India. Both in front of and behind the camera, South Asian women are still underrepresented in the media. The lack of diverse narratives in the media is a result of stereotypes and the limited chances available to women in media professions. This leads to the narrow and antiquated portrayals of women in the media. In South Asia, the majority of perfume commercials use the female figure as a sexual stimulant. Due to the underrepresentation of women in the Bangladeshi and Indian cinema industries, there is a distorted representation of female perspectives in the stories that are shown on screen. Women are harassed and sexually abused on several social media platforms, such as Facebook and Telegram. Social internet has unintentionally led many women in South Asia to become prostitutes.

South Asian women are deterred from pursuing jobs in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) by the lack of visible female role models in the industry. Stereotypes and biases towards women may discourage young girls from pursuing careers in technology. Young girls may not have role models to encourage them to pursue jobs in subjects like computer science or engineering in Sri Lanka, where women are underrepresented in

technology-related occupations. South Asian women encounter more difficulties navigating the digital landscape due to limited access to education and training in digital literacy. Their inability to fully utilize technology for personal and professional development is hampered by a lack of skills and knowledge. It will take coordinated action to close the gender gap in the digital sphere, stop cyberbullying, and advance gender diversity in the technology industry in order to address the issues South Asian women confront in the media and technology. South Asian societies may enable women to fully participate in and contribute to the quickly changing digital landscape by funding digital literacy programmes, supporting female role models, and confronting gender prejudices in media depictions. Realizing gender parity in the media and technology sectors is essential for South Asian women's empowerment as well as the region's general advancement and inventiveness.

Conclusion

South Asian women confront a multifaceted array of socio-cultural, economic, and political obstacles that distinguish them from their counterparts in other countries. Women in South Asia continue to be shaped by strongly ingrained gender norms, prejudices, and cultural practices, which affects their access to political empowerment, economic opportunity, and education. The fight against dowry systems, child marriage, and other gender-based atrocities highlights how urgently radical reform is needed.

South Asian women face several economic challenges, including low labour market participation, a widening pay disparity, and cultural norms that impede their ability to advance in their careers. Comprehensive reforms are necessary to promote gender parity, as the hardships experienced by these women are exacerbated by political underrepresentation and

insufficient legal protections. Even though there has been progress in a number of areas, addressing these problems will require persistent work and teamwork. A comprehensive strategy is needed for the empowerment of South Asian women, one that includes questioning social conventions, pushing for legislative changes, and creating economic opportunities. Positive changes can be greatly accelerated by international cooperation, communication, and support. Collaboration across global organizations, governments, and society is essential to imagining a future in which South Asian women have equal rights and opportunities. A more inclusive and just society can be paved by South Asia by tearing down obstacles, advancing education, and creating a culture that cherishes gender equality. The prospect of a better and more equal future for South Asian women and, by extension, women worldwide, is what motivates us to continue on this road of overcoming these obstacles.

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