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Editorial

Dear Readers,

The Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) continues to offer research, parliamentary development, legislative, capacity building and public outreach initiatives to serve the individual MPs, caucuses and committees both anticipated and on demand.

Hon. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, President PIPS Board of Governors/ Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan graced his presence at PIPS to steer meeting of the Institute's leadership aimed at streamlining the workplan along with a proactive approach to offer quality legislative, research and capacity building services through greater outreach to individual MPs and committees. The Institute held an absorbing day long New Members Induction Program on April 17, 2024 for newly elected Members of National Assembly of Pakistan in close collaboration with National Assembly Secretariat and the EU-GIZ-PIPS Mustehkam Parlmaan Project.

This April 2024 Issue of the PIPS Parliamentary Research Digest includes absorbing write-ups on Separation of Powers: Balancing Executive, Legislative, and Judicial functions for Good Governance, Understanding Artificial Intelligence, Parliament's role on interfaith harmony, updates of international and parliamentary development, and an introduction regarding PIPS Research on Demand Services for newly elected Members of Parliament. The Issue also includes the National Assembly Resolution on International Earth Day, celebrated worldwide on April 22, 2024. Please feel free to send your feedback and/or contact the team for any of our services at research@pips.gov.pk

Muhammad Rashid Mafzool Zaka
Director General (Research)



Honorable Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan / President PIPS Board of Governors
Sardar Ayaz Sadiq chairing briefing session on PIPS services with Institute's leadership on
Wednesday, April 24, 2024

ANALYSIS

Separation of Powers: Balancing Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Functions for Good Governance

Muhammad Rashid Mafzool Zaka
Director General (Research), PIPS

1. Defining the Concept of Separation of Power

In parliamentary democracies world over, the Constitution earmarks a tripartite division of power amongst the three pillars of the modern nation-state – Parliament, Executive and Judicature, which has been recognized and universally accepted as the best form of governance. The theory of separation of power essentially draws on the logic that the three organs of the State have their own specific and independent mandated function, i.e. the Parliament legislates and conducts Rule-Making, represents people and performs oversight of the elected government whereas the Executive is expected to undertake Rule-Application implying the laws to draw the policies of the State in accordance with the aspirations and will of the masses and run the affairs of the country by generating resources and practicing good governance; last but not the least, the judiciary performs the essential function of Rule-Adjudication or in simple words interpretation of laws as and when the need arises. One of the earliest and clearest statements of the checks and balances created by the constitutional separation of powers was given by French political philosopher and judge Montesquieu, who presented the theory of Spirit of Laws in 1748:

When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or in the same body of magistrates, there can be no liberty... there is no liberty if the powers of judging is not separated from the legislative and executive... there would be an end to everything, if the same man or the same body... were to exercise those three powers.¹

2. Rationale of Trichotomy of power and Characteristics

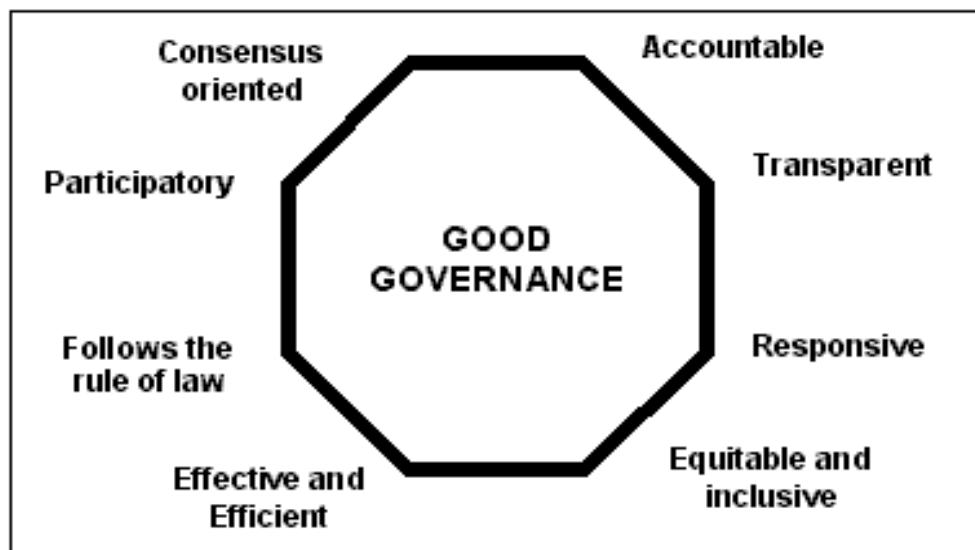
The good governance model necessarily revolves around key concepts of inclusivity and participation of the people in a transparent and accountable system that aims to achieve its goals effectively to the benefit of all stakeholders and with optimum and efficient utilization of resources. It is a famous maxim that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Thus, the key principles of the theory of trichotomy of powers comprises functional specialization, division of responsibilities, distribution of power and authority; decentralization and separation of powers, which all are core instruments for the effective public policies and overall good of any country as well as the people living in that country.

The separation of power not only prevents any government from arbitrary and abrupt decision-making against or in favour of anyone but it is mandatory to safeguard the interests, rights and freedoms of every individual in the society. It is understandable that concentration of all power and authority in one hand or two is certainly compromising the individual freedom and autonomy. In this context, while at one hand the Constitutional scheme of separation of power clearly earmarks the domain of every state organ, it at the same time creates inbuilt checks and balances so that no single state-organ misuses the powers.

¹ UK Parliament Briefing Paper, “The Separation of Power,” see at: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06053/SN06053.pdf> browsed May 7, 2023, p.2.

However social scientists and analyst critical of separation of powers are of the opinion that strict compliance of the theory becomes problematic and the organs are interdependent and cannot be strictly kept away from each other. Therefore, best way forward is acknowledgement of each-others role and to understand that without a working relationship with implicit accommodation, the three state-pillars cannot function appropriately. In contemporary world though there is recognition that the Parliament, being the mother of all institution as the only fully elected legislature, is the most imperative institution of the country but due to larger population with Executive having the administrative control over use of all state resources, the role of Executive has enhanced multifaceted in last half a century. The provision of delegated legislation where the government is authorized to make rules after the legislation has been passed, gives unequivocal power to the executive in implementing the will of the legislature and the law.

Good governance is very important aspect of governance as it is participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and impartial, and promotes the rule of law. It guarantees that political, social and economic priorities are based on integrity and consensus in society. It also ensures that the allocation of resources is deemed upon voices of the poorest and the most helpless citizens. It has 8 major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society. The eight ingredients and characteristics of good Governance expected to be applied by a democratically elected government as shown in the figure below: ³



The Parliament nevertheless with its uniqueness of being the only institution perpetually reflecting the aspirations, will and egalitarianism of the people through their elected representatives is empowered with authority and enormous responsibility to keep continuous watch and oversight to scrutinize administrative, policy and implementation aspects through parliamentary tools of questions, adjournment motions and above all departmental standing committees including the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee to ensure that core characteristics of good governance are practiced by the Executive at all tiers.

3. International Best Practices on How the Separation works

The will of the people is given centrality in most international jurisdictions such as the developed democracies e.g US, Germany, UK and mostly countries in North. A fool-proof system of free and fair elections is the primary key to a Parliament that is truly representative of the aspirations of the people. Accordingly, every institution is answerable to the people.

It is a myth that separation of power is the only simple recipe of a harmonious and prosperous society. The principle of separation of power cannot function in absence of other imperative requirements. Going through the principles as mentioned in constitutions of developed democracies, it can be concluded that the Constitutional provisions on fundamental rights, rule of law, independence of judiciary, economic justice and a perpetual system of democratic tradition and vigilance over the various institutions are imperative ingredients to ensure civil freedoms and people's liberty. Thus, separation of power, if too strictly followed without paying heed to rule of law and above mentioned rights of the people, the three organs can dangerously transform into three different governments at the same time - legislative-government, executive-government and judicature-government. Consequently, the country may face constitutional conflicts, misperceptions and deadlocks² where any or multiple institutions transgress their allowed jurisdiction of authority and the country falls prey to vicious cycle of self-centered power-politics rather than fulfilling their specific role in following the constitutional scheme of ensuring rule of law by respecting each others' functions and domains.

Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the inspirational father of the Pakistan, envisioned a pluralistic, Islamic and democratic Constitution for Pakistan that ensures the three imperative values of an egalitarian society - "equality, freedoms and justice," to all the citizens. In a broadcast, he reiterated that:

"The constitution of Pakistan has yet to be framed by the Pakistan Constituent Assembly. I do not know what the ultimate shape of this constitution is going to be, but I am sure that it will be of a democratic type, embodying the essential principle of Islam. Today, they are as applicable in actual life as they were 1,300 years ago. Islam and its idealism have taught us democracy. It has taught equality of man, justice and fair play to everybody. We are the inheritors of these glorious traditions and are fully alive to our responsibilities and obligations as framers of the future constitution of Pakistan. In any case Pakistan is not going to be a theocratic State to be ruled by priests with a divine mission. We have many non-Muslims –Hindus, Christians, and Parsis –but they are all Pakistanis. They will enjoy the same rights and privileges as any other citizens and will play their rightful part in the affairs of Pakistan."³

In his historic address to the inaugural session of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on August 11, 1947 elaborated that "The first is the very onerous and responsible task of framing our future constitution of Pakistan and the second of functioning as a full and complete Sovereign body as the Federal Legislature of Pakistan."⁴ The Father of the Nation was absolutely clear with regards to the Legislature (Parliament) as a sovereign institution that has got all the powers. He emphasized the priorities for the Parliament and the Executive in following words:

² Sneha Singh, "Separation of Powers in UK, US and India - a comparative analysis, see at: <https://legalstudymaterial.com/separation-of-powers-in-uk-usa-and-india/> browsed May 7, 2023

³ Radio Speech of the Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to the people of US, February 1948. See <https://www.jinnahofpakistan.com/2010/04/pakistan-and-her-people-ii-feb-1948.html> Browsed on May 8, 2023.

⁴ Ibid.

The first and the foremost thing that I would like to emphasise is this — remember that you are now a **Sovereign legislative body and you have got all the powers**. It, therefore, places on you the gravest responsibility as to how you should take your decisions. The first observation that I would like to make is this. You will no doubt agree with me that the first duty of a Government is to maintain law and order, so that the life, property and religious beliefs of its subjects are fully protected by the State.⁵

Thus the first National Parliament clearly envisaged itself representing the will of the People to exercise complete authority to fully provide the fundamental human security to all without any discrimination. Pakistan's legislature wanted to set an example for the world. On August 12, 1947, the Constituent Assembly approved the formation of first house-committee to advise it on fundamental rights.⁶ The legislature led by the Quaid had a view of the State, influenced by the Gladstonian tradition of 19th century liberalism, reiterating on individual's financial and legal rights.⁷ The separation of power concept in the Quaid's vision was legalistic where he expected all institutions to perform their mandated functions, as devised by the Constitution and laws made by an all-powerful federal legislature with the hope that all organs of state and institutions will deliver in an impartial manner to leave no stone unturned for well-being of every individual by provision of legal system that ensures freedoms that does not necessarily imply to do and have whatever one's heart desires but whatever is just and fair.

The United Nations elaborates the same imperative need of rule of law to maintain an essential check and balance on all the state-organs:

“The rule of law is a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards. It requires measures to ensure adherence to the principles of supremacy of the law, equality before the law, accountability to the law, fairness in the application of the law, separation of powers, participation in decision-making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness, and procedural and legal transparency. The rule of law is fundamental to international peace and security and political stability; to achieve economic and social progress and development; and to protect people's rights and fundamental freedoms. It is foundational to people's access to public services, curbing corruption, restraining the abuse of power, and to establishing the social contract between people and the state.”⁸

4. Separation of Powers in US and UK

The Constitution of the United States of America (US) incorporated the separation of powers as its following articles-sections mention the three state-organ's separate jurisdictions: Article I – Section 1 – “All the legislative powers are vested in Congress.” Article II – Section 1 – “All the executive powers are vested in the President,” and Article III – Section 1 – “All the judicial powers are vested in the federal courts and the Supreme Court.”

⁵ Address of the Founder of Pakistan Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on 11th August 1947 to the First to the Constituent Assembly, See at: <https://na.gov.pk/en/content.php?id=74> browsed May 8, 2023.

⁶ Politics and Policies of the Quaid e Azam, KF Yousaf (editor) “Quaid e Azam Founder of the State,” S Razi Wasti, Islamabad: NIHRC, 1994, *ibid.* p. 335

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ UN website What is Rule of Law? See at: <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/what-is-the-rule-of-law/>, browsed May 7, 2023.

Parliamentary sovereignty is the key principle of the UK Constitution. “It makes Parliament the supreme legal authority in the UK, which can create or end any law. Generally, the courts cannot overrule its legislation and no Parliament can pass laws that future Parliaments cannot change.”⁹ The three branches are not officially separated as the Executive evolves and enjoys majority in the Parliament while judiciary is independent, but there is still a large overlapping as in many other democracies. The British Parliament has control over the executive that is answerable to it always and the British House of Lords is both the upper house of Parliament as well as the highest court of appeal.¹⁰

- i. The Lord Chancellor is head of the judiciary, Chairman of the Legislature (House of Commons), a member of the executive, and frequently a member of the cabinet. The Lord Chancellor is appointed by the Monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister and is a senior member of the Cabinet. They head the Ministry of Justice as the Secretary of State for Justice.
- ii. The House of Commons eventually controls the Legislature.
- iii. The Judiciary is unbiased; however, the judges of the higher courts may be eliminated on recommendation from each of the Houses of Parliament.
- iv. The resting of powers in a single institution thus denies the certainty that there may be any type of Separation of Powers in Britain.

The UK Parliament passed few laws to cater for political developments within and outside the UK that others undermined the application of parliamentary sovereignty. These include: i. The devolution of power to bodies like the Scottish Parliament and Senedd Cymru, ii. The Human Rights Act 1998; iii. The UK's entry to the European Union in 1973 - and subsequent exit in 2020; and iv. The decision to establish a UK Supreme Court in 2009, which ends the House of Lords function as the UK's final court of appeal. However, it is noteworthy that these developments do not fundamentally undermine the principle of parliamentary sovereignty, since, in theory at least, Parliament could repeal any of the laws implementing these changes.¹¹

5. Constitutional & legal provisions of Pakistan and the separation of powers

The Constitution of Pakistan is precisely based on the principles of “parliamentary authority,” “separation of powers,” and “independent judiciary,” which jointly ensure to protect the citizens of the state from any impulsive and unrestrained powers of the rulers or state institutions. The 1973 Constitution provides for a parliamentary federal form of Government with a bicameral legislature, comprising of the National Assembly and the Senate at the centre and provincial legislatures in each of the four federating units. The Preamble reiterates that “Whereas it is the *will of the people* of Pakistan to establish an order and where the state shall exercise its powers and authority through the chosen representatives of the people.”

- i. Articles 7 defines that the “State” means the Federal Government, Majlis e Shoora (Parliament), a provincial government, a provincial assembly, and such local or other authorities in Pakistan as are by law empowered to impose any tax or cess.
- ii. Article 90 define the Federal Government as well as how the executive authority shall be practised by the Federal Government,

⁹ Parliament’s Authority, see <https://www.parliament.uk/about/how/role/sovereignty/>, browsed May 7, 2023

¹⁰ Sneha Singh, “Separation of Powers in UK, US and India – a comparative analysis,” op. cit.

¹¹ Developments affecting Sovereignty: <https://www.parliament.uk/about/how/role/sovereignty/>, Browsed May 7, 2023

- iii. Article 90 (1) directs that the Federal Government shall act through the Prime Minister, who shall be the Chief Executive of the Federation,
- iv. Article 46 implies that the President be kept informed by the Prime Minister on all matters of internal and foreign policy and on all government bills while Article 48 clearly lays down that in the exercise of his functions, the President shall act on all in accordance with the advice of the Cabinet or the Prime Minister.
- v. Article 91 (6) makes the cabinet collectively responsible in front of the bicameral National Parliament.
- vi. Part 7 of the Constitution explains the independence of judiciary and its responsibilities.
- vii. Article 176 defines that the Supreme Court clearly constitutes of not only the Chief Justice of Pakistan but so many other judges as may be determined by the Act of Parliament or until so determined may be fixed by the President.

Thus, in Pakistan, like UK and India, the concept of separation of powers is overlapping and not strictly formal and fully separated amongst three state-organs as is the case in the US. The Federal Government, which is led by the Leader of the House having majority of the National Assembly of Pakistan, i.e the Prime Minister is on one side as the Chief Executive of the country and the State, authorized to practice the executive authority of the government that implies making delegated legislation and rules of all laws passed, developing government and state policies and implementing them in true spirit for well-being of the people as the top priority. The elected Prime Minister enjoys financial authority as given by the Constitution to make all the expenditure. On the other hand, the Cabinet collectively is responsible in front of both Houses of the Parliament. The President as the Head of the State has to act in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister who is the Chief Executive of the Federation.

6. Conclusion

In a nutshell, Parliamentary authority and the distribution of power among the different pillars of state as envisaged by the Constitution, remains the imperative principle that helps to check any abuse of power and to maintain rule of law. Any politico-judicial impasse historically is found to be vested in repeated violation of the basic principle of the rule of law and especially its essential aspect of "impartiality and fair play," as desired in all legal and state matters emphasized by the Father of the Nation and the Parliament's sovereignty viz a viz making and amending laws. It will always be so if state-organs such as the Judicature or for that matter any State/Constitutional institution transgresses its constitutionally laid out mandate to enter the domain of others specially to entangle themselves needlessly in political issues that are best resolved and catered for by elected representatives of the people in the Parliament or amongst political parties through political-parleys world over.

The three key principles of Parliamentary sovereignty, rule of law and impartiality, as envisioned by the Father of the Nation, the Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Constitution of Pakistan as well as the internationally recognized best practice in any of the civilized developed democracies, is the key to be respected by all institutions, followed and fulfilled for the effective and efficient statehood aimed at ensuring the provision of freedoms and rights to all, especially the poor and marginalized communities in the country. Harmony and sincerity in following the Constitution, securing merit and impartial rule of law inspired by the sacred mutual obligation and duty of all institutions in serving the people and working together to consolidate their well-being must remain our unwavering top priority. It is the simplest way forward towards a happier, more tolerant and prosper Pakistan for all the citizens as given in Article 3 of the Constitution: "The State shall ensure the elimination of all forms of exploitation and the gradual fulfilment of the fundamental principle, from each according to his ability and to each according to his work."

OPINION

Parliaments in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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1. Introduction

Since ages, dazzling achievements by the scientific community in multiple areas have created ripples across the governance sphere and the wider socio-economic arena. While the benefits of scientific advancements such as in medicine and surgery meant to reduce human suffering and increase the lease of human life as well as the engineering marvels which facilitate human activity are always welcome, problems arise when these developments lead to harmful innovations such as the chemical, biological and nuclear weapons which pose threats to the fundamental human rights, well-being and the very survival of life on the planet. More recently, Artificial Intelligence is setting new heights in technological development penetrating almost every sphere of human activity. Advancements in digital technology mimicking human cognitive functions have been generating new sets of opportunities as well as challenges for policy makers and legislators around the world. The Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Good Summit 2023, led by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), concluded with the world's first humanoid (robot-only) press conference whereby robots answered the questions raised by participating journalists.¹ The Committee for the Future within the Parliament of Finland involved AI generated models in the regular parliamentary procedure. In April 2021, the Committee interviewed two distinct AI models in order to gather input for the statement on EU's strategic foresight.²

While the term Artificial Intelligence has been in use since 1956, the unprecedented growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems, such as the Chat GPT built on large language models, in past few years is creating new avenues for growth in various fields generating important questions for the policy making community generally, and the parliaments specifically. From analyzing deep fake channels to looking into the utility of Artificial Intelligence within the parliamentary precinct, AI is proving its salience for analysis in the legislatures. The positive or negative impacts of this emerging technology necessitate putting in place robust regulatory or governance framework at national, regional and global levels. Moreover, the need to put in place vigorous legislative frameworks is increasingly being felt across the world. This paper seeks to analyze parliamentary functions in relation to developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) domain. It presents a brief introduction of the emerging technology and the potentials and risks it carries in various fields. Next, it presents efforts at global, regional and national levels aimed at governing the AI systems, including the efforts to develop AI specific legislative instruments. Lastly, it offers a glimpse into multitude of models being developed to utilize the latest technology within the parliamentary precincts.

2. Understanding Artificial Intelligence (AI)

According to the OECD, "an AI system is a machine-based system that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content,

¹ International Telecommunication Union, *AI for Good Summit 2023, Snapshot Report*, (2023).

² Fotios Fitsilis, "Artificial Intelligence (AI) in parliaments – preliminary analysis of the Eduskunta experiment," *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 27, no. 4 (2021), 621-633, DOI: 10.1080/13572334.2021.1976947.

recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments.”³ Put more simply, “artificial intelligence is a machine’s ability to perform some cognitive functions we usually associate with human minds, such as perceiving, reasoning, learning, interacting with the environment, problem solving, and even exercising creativity.”⁴ Some of the applied AI examples include GPS guidance, Open AI’s Chat GPT, automatic weapons systems etc. Machine learning is an advanced version of AI which makes use of large sets of algorithms to make predictions and processing data. Moreover, deep learning is yet sophisticated form of machine learning which makes use of neural networks, patterned on human brain, to exploit intricate data patterns. Generative AI is advanced version of deep learning which retains the ability to generate content while responding to an input. By using large language models, generative AI models can create text, images, videos and data.⁵ Some of the most commonly used AI applications are as follows:

- i. **Speech recognition:** exploits natural language processing (NLP) to convert human speech into written text. Many mobile applications utilize this application for voice search.
- ii. **Customer service:** the use of AI generated applications in customer service is reducing the placement of human agents for various tasks. Virtual agents and chatbots are simplifying the customer experience by engagement through websites and social media interfaces.
- iii. **Computer vision:** it enables computers to extract useful information from digital products like images and videos and produce output as per directives. Some of the applications in computer vision can be seen in social media tagging, radiology imaging in medicine, as well as self-driving cars.
- iv. **Supply chain:** search and pattern recognition algorithms augment supply chains by providing analysis of real time data.
- v. **Weather forecasting:** AI modulated machine-learning techniques enable more accurate weather forecasting.
- vi. **Anomaly detection:** AI systems can help locate errors or faults in intricate equipment. They can also help in identifying security breach.⁶

With all the benefits AI offers in different sectors where it is applied to enhance productivity and efficiency, the new technology comes with multitude of risks some of them are quite visible and understandable however many unknown harmful impacts are still under studied. The lack of adequate governance and regulatory frameworks further exacerbates the associated perils. Some of the challenges of Artificial Intelligence emerge from its inherent technicalities which can give rise to prejudices or may produce inaccurate results. Manmade risks from this technology take the shape of deep fakes and disinformation which can hamper the democratic process thereby threatening political stability and social harmony. Problems may arise out of the blind trust on machine processes, which may significantly alter the labor markets causing wider economic imbalances.⁷ As per the IMF estimates, almost 40 percent of global employment is vulnerable to AI related models.⁸ Most importantly, the use of AI generated autonomous weapons is giving sleepless nights to policy makers who anticipate unimaginable harm to civilian populations during war and conflict. The United Nations Secretary General in its report *Roadmap for Digital Cooperation*

³ OECD, “Explanatory memorandum on the updated OECD definition of an AI system,” *OECD Artificial Intelligence Papers* No. 8, March 2024.

⁴ “What is AI (Artificial Intelligence)?, 03 April 2024, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-ai>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ What is Artificial Intelligence (AI)?” <https://www.ibm.com/topics/artificial-intelligence>.

⁷ United Nations, *Governing AI for Humanity*, (December 2023).

⁸ Mauro Cazzaniga, Florence Jaumotte, Longji Li, Giovanni Melina, Augustus J. Panton, Carlo Pizzinelli, Emma Rockall, and Marina M. Tavares, “Gen-AI: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work,” *IMF Staff Discussion Notes*, (January 2024).

published in June 2020, highlighted the need to prohibit the use of lethal autonomous weapons systems.⁹

3. Governing AI

Alongside the developments in the AI world, various governance frameworks have taken shape at global, regional, and national levels, in both public as well as private sector, in order to prevent the harmful effects of the emerging technologies without hindering the scientific advancements meant to benefit humanity as a whole. In March 2024, the United Nations adopted first Artificial Intelligence resolution from the platform of the General Assembly. Titled “Seizing the opportunities of safe, secure and trustworthy artificial intelligence systems for sustainable development”¹⁰ the resolution highlights the potentials and perils of this emerging technology. It also emphasizes safe, secure and trustworthy use of AI systems and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in this regard. Earlier, the United Nations Secretary General established a High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence in August 2023. While final report is due around August 2024, the Advisory Body presented the interim report in December 2023 titled “Governing AI for Humanity.”¹¹ The report publishes five (5) guiding principles and seven (7) institutional functions for governing AI at the global level. The guiding principles emphasize the need to ensure inclusiveness, public interest, promotion of data commons, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and the respect for international human rights and humanitarian norms. Moreover, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) formulated non-binding *Principles on AI* as far back as 2019. In 2021, UNESCO adopted the *Recommendations on the Ethics of AI*. The Group of Seven (G7) countries came up with *International Guiding Principles on Artificial Intelligence* last year. The Council of Europe is in the process to bring forward an international convention on AI.¹²

In China, the Cyberspace Administration led major central government ministries and agencies to publish the *Interim Measures for the Management of Generative Artificial Intelligence Services*. Developed in July 2023, the Measures are being implemented with effect from August 15, 2023. They seek to balance the growth of the digital technology while securing national and public interests alongside ensuring legitimate rights of legal entities. The interim measures include provisions which highlight the need to preserve the country’s ideological foundations and state control alongside ensuring socio-economic stability. They also provide instrumental framework for curbing algorithmic malpractices in the form of fake news. In contrast, the United Kingdom has so far decided to rely on the existing mechanisms, to tackle the AI risks, rather than coming up with an altogether new regulatory authority. A White Paper issued by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology in 2023 contends that the many of the risks associated with AI are already managed by the existing laws and regulations. The Japan’s Integrated Innovation Strategy Promotion Council came up with “Social Principles of Human-Centric AI” in March 2019. These principles converge with AI in three major subjects: a) human dignity, (b) diversity and inclusion, and (c) sustainability. However, the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, through its White Paper published in July 2021, has ruled out the requirement to put in place any regulation which hampers the growth of AI in the country. In the United States of America, the *Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights* and the *Executive Order on the safe, secure, and trustworthy development*

⁹ United Nations, “Roadmap for Digital Cooperation,” *Report of the Secretary General*, (June 2020).

¹⁰ United Nations General Assembly, resolution A/78/L.49.

¹¹ United Nations, *Governing AI for Humanity*, (December 2023).

¹² Tambiama Madiega, “Artificial Intelligence Act,” *European Parliamentary Research Service, Briefing*, March 2024.

and use of Artificial Intelligence issued in 2023 seek to ensure fundamental rights amidst developments in the AI sector.¹³

4. Legislating AI

The European Parliament passed the Artificial Intelligence Act on March 13, 2024. First of its kind legislative instrument in the world, the Act will get final approval from the European Council around May this year, entry into force will come about 24 months after approval. The Act, initiated in 2021, got support of 523 MEPs, 46 MEPs voted against the legislation, and 49 abstained from voting. The Act is based on a risk oriented framework. For example, AI applications with highest associated risks are banned; those slightly less risky are subject to certain legal requirements. While applications considered not much harmful are not covered under the regulations.¹⁴ Legislation similar to the EU AI Act is underway in Brazil as well. As far back as February 2022, Brazil established a commission of legal experts with the mandate to provide regulatory framework for AI governance in the country. The proposal presented by the commission after hectic engagements with relevant stakeholders successfully sailed through the Congress and is currently under debate in the Senate. Like the EU Act it takes a risk based approach, however offers a new model in AI legislation due to the incorporation of human rights framework.¹⁵

5. Parliaments and AI

While parliaments lead the efforts in regulating AI for the benefit of humanity, the emerging technology has far reaching impacts for the democratic space, also it offers innovative models for simplifying or modernizing the parliamentary operations. Political parties are using AI to reach large audiences, thereby changing the course of all vital election results. The harmful uses of AI models to generate deep fake and disinformation is threatening the democratic values and processes. As the technology becomes ever more sophisticated, actors in the parliamentary domain find it difficult to curb the onslaught of fake information and their impacts on the election processes as well as the wider democratic dispensation. The Parliamentary Handbook on Disinformation, AI and Synthetic Media published in 2023, analyses the multiple facets of disinformation as it relates to synthetic media and artificial intelligence. While recognizing the potential of AI in transforming the parliamentary procedures, it emphasizes the need to take a cautious approach while deploying this technology in the parliamentary domain.¹⁶ The Global Parliamentary Network of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) created a thematic parliamentary group on this vital technology as far back as 2019, in order to gauge the impact of AI with regards to democracy, human rights and rule of law. In similar vein, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) embraced a series of

¹³ Danielle Allen, Sarah Hubbard, Woojin Lim, Allison Stanger, Shlomit Wagman, and Kinney Zalesne, "A Roadmap for Governing AI: Technology Governance and Power Sharing Liberalism," *Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, Occasional Papers Series*, (January 2024).

¹⁴ European Parliament, "Artificial Intelligence Act: MEPs adopt landmark law," *Press Release*, 13 March 2024, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20240308IPR19015/artificial-intelligence-act-meps-adopt-landmark-law>.

¹⁵ Laura Schertel Mendes and Beatriz Kira, "The road to regulation of artificial intelligence: the Brazilian experience," 21 December 2023, <https://policyreview.info/articles/news/road-regulation-artificial-intelligence-brazilian-experience/1737>.

¹⁶ Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, *Parliamentary Handbook on Disinformation, AI and Synthetic Media*, (2023).

resolutions and recommendations in 2020 with the objective to analyze the risks AI offers in the democratic space.¹⁷

Within the parliamentary precincts, AI driven models are being used for providing assistance services to MPs, legislative drafting, search of parliamentary videos, and parliamentary reporting. As parliaments assess the role of the emerging technology in simplifying the parliamentary procedures and practices, innovative AI models are being developed to harness its potential in the parliamentary setting. The parliament of South Africa has been exploring the use of chatbot, built on conversation interface and natural language processing (NLP), for providing assistance to members in retrieving parliamentary information such as the status of a particular bill or resolution. The US of Representatives has simplified the task of its legislative staff with the introduction of AI tool which retains the ability to analyze differences between legislative instruments. The tool can read the citations to legal provisions and included in a particular bill, it can also issue amendatory instructions. Making use of the speech recognition techniques in conjunction with the data from the Diet of Japan, the Japan's National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) has developed the system to make a robust search engine for parliamentary videos. The Netherlands House of Representatives has simplified the parliamentary reporting system through the development of *Speech2Write* system. The system can convert voice to text, also it is capable of producing written report by translating the recorded voice.¹⁸ The Italian Senate has been making use of AI models to counter filibustering in the legislative process. Filibustering happens in legislation when multiple drafts are submitted with small change in words with the intention to slow down the overall process. In order to counter this malpractice, the Italian Senate uses text clustering algorithms which can identify similarly worded amendments.¹⁹

6. Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence presents yet another zenith of scientific achievements. The unprecedented growth of this technology in recent years has enabled its penetration in almost every sphere of human activity. Recent reports suggest significant impact of AI led models in multitude of socio-economic arenas such as disturbances in labor markets and election manipulation. Nevertheless, despite all the claims of its super or hyper performance, it will remain dependent upon and subservient to human intelligence. Already, the risks and challenges posed by AI have been identified triggering governance and regulatory responses at national, regional, and global levels of analysis. These include instruments such as legislation, resolution, executive order, as well as set of normative or ethical principles. While some countries are confident of existing laws and regulations to tackle the AI risks, some others have been in the race to adopt robust legislative instruments specifically targeting Artificial Intelligence. The emerging technology is not new to parliaments as well, some of the innovative models embraced by various legislatures demonstrate their adaptation to emerging technologies. However, many of the areas in terms of basic parliamentary functions, such as legislation representation and oversight, remain untapped. Also many of the parliaments have yet to reap the multitude of benefits AI offers for parliamentary business and procedures.

¹⁷ Jorn von Lucke, Jan Estcheid, and Fotios Fitsilis, "Using Artificial Intelligence for Legislation – Thinking about and selecting realistic topics," (2022), <https://ceur-ws.org/Vol-3399/paper3.pdf>.

¹⁸ "Artificial Intelligence: innovation in parliaments," *IPU Innovation tracker*, no. 4, (12 February 2020), <https://www.ipu.org/innovation-tracker/story/artificial-intelligence-innovation-in-parliaments>.

¹⁹ "How AI helps the Italian Senate manage amendments," *IPU Innovation tracker*, no. 12, (06 October 2022), <https://www.ipu.org/innovation-tracker/story/how-ai-helps-italian-senate-manage-amendments>.

OPINION

Role of Parliamentarians and Religious Leaders in Promoting Gender Equality and Youth Participation

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1. Introduction

Throughout history, religious institutions and faith-based organizations have played a significant role in providing social and welfare services, humanitarian assistance and advocacy for social justice reform worldwide. The fight against poverty and inequality is deeply ingrained in social justice principles that are found across various religious traditions. Muslims follow the practice of Zakat, which mandates donating 2.5 percent of their annual earnings to charitable causes to address poverty and distribute wealth. Today, faith-based organizations serve as a conduit for communities to fulfill their religious charity obligations and work towards social justice and equality by offering assistance to that in need with the funds they receive.¹

Parliaments play an important role in addressing concerns of the society. The parliamentary process allows for addressing the differing interests of various groups, which builds relationships within parliament and the broader community. Inclusive and diverse parliaments ensure representation and effective management of social diversity. However, a parliament's ability to promote social cohesion depends on its inclusivity (in representing all relevant sectors of society), allowing access to political decision-making and addressing concerns of all of them.

The establishment of resilient societies that prioritize inclusivity and well-being is a shared interest between parliamentarians and religious actors. Despite their distinct areas of responsibility, they are united by their pursuit of a harmonious and equitable society. Both actors are committed to advancing social justice, human dignity, and ethical frameworks based on compassion and respect. As influential leaders, they have the capacity to shape public opinion and encourage community engagement in initiatives that promote inclusivity.

Although progress has been made in some regions, many parliaments still struggle to promote gender equality and meaningfully include youth. Women are often underrepresented in parliaments, with significant gender imbalances. Religious institutions may perpetuate gender stereotypes and limit women roles and leadership opportunities through traditional interpretations.

Many religious institutions still adhere to traditional interpretations that limit women's participation in leadership roles or restrict their access to education. This exclusion of women and youth from decision-making processes ultimately hinders progress towards achieving true gender equality and inclusive governance. Moreover, youth voices are frequently marginalized or overlooked in both parliamentary and religious contexts, leaving limited opportunities for their meaningful involvement in shaping policies.

In 2018, the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians identified goals to be achieved by 2035 that correspond with different age groups in the world's population.

- “A minimum 15 per cent of under-30 parliamentarians, corresponding to the proportion of the global population aged between 20 and 29 (18 per cent);

¹ Nora Khalaf-Elledge, Scoping Study: Looking Back to Look Forward. The Role of Religious Actors in Gender Equality since the Beijing Declaration. (Washington DC; Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities(JLI), 2021) .

- A minimum of 35 per cent of under-40 parliamentarians, corresponding to the proportion of the global population aged between 20 and 39 (38 per cent);
- A minimum of 45 per cent of under-45 parliamentarians, corresponding to the proportion of the global population aged between 20 and 44 (48 per cent)”

Young women aspiring to become MPs face dual obstacles due to their age and gender. The global proportion of women parliamentarians currently stands at 26%. According to the 2021 IPU report,² only 2.6% of parliamentarians worldwide are under the age of 30, with a further 17.5% under the age of 40 and 30.2% under the age of 45.³ A quarter of single and lower chambers of parliament have no MPs under the age of 30, while only one percent have no MPs under the age of 40. Although male MPs outnumber their female counterparts in every age group, younger cohorts of MPs have achieved greater gender balance than their older colleagues.

2. Challenges in bringing together parliamentarians and religious leaders

It is estimated that 84% of the global population is associated with a religion. The task of promoting gender equality and empowering young individuals by bringing together parliamentarians and religious actors can be difficult due to differences in beliefs, values, and priorities. These challenges are multifaceted. Various religious actors may have conflicting views on gender roles and women's rights due to diverse interpretations of religious texts. Conservative perspectives might resist change, making it difficult to find consensus. Traditional gender roles and societal norms can also hinder gender equality and youth participation. These deep-rooted beliefs often limit opportunities for women and young people, making it challenging for them to engage in decision-making processes. Challenging these norms while remaining sensitive to cultural and religious beliefs requires careful navigation.

In their campaigns to promote gender equality, lawmakers and religious leaders could face resistance from conservatives in their communities who view such initiatives as a threat to their customary way of life. Initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality may face serious obstacles as a result of this resistance to change. Parliamentarians and religious actors may also struggle to communicate and work together effectively if they fail to understand one another's responsibilities and perspectives. This information gap may cause a lack of trust between the two sides, which may make collaboration difficult. Establishing successful collaborations can be challenging due to stereotypes and misperceptions of one another's intentions. It can be difficult to reach a compromise between upholding religious freedoms and promoting youth empowerment, gender equality and other social causes, especially when there are conflicts between secular government and religious influence. This delicate balancing act necessitates careful evaluation of the conflicts that may occur.

3. Gender equality and youth Participation in Parliament of Pakistan

The goal of achieving gender balance in political participation and decision-making has been recognized globally in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Various governments have implemented legislative candidate quotas or reserved seats to provide opportunities for women's political involvement in national parliaments.

Pakistan is ranked 110th globally by IPU Parline monthly ranking based on the percentage of women in national parliaments.⁴ Pakistan has made significant progress in increasing women's political participation in 2002 general elections. The effective participation of female

² IPU, *Youth Participation in National Parliaments*, (IPU, 2021), <https://www.ipu.org/youth2021>

³ The youth definition varies from country to country. According to IPU statutes, any Parliamentarians who is under the age of 45 is young. However, to accommodate diversity in the ages, this group is further subdivided into three namely under ages 30, 40 and 45.

⁴ <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=4&year=2023>

parliamentarians was witnessed in the 2018 during national and provincial assembly elections. Sixty women were elected to the national assembly on reserved seats and nine on general seats. Additionally, there were 20 women senators in Pakistan, including two general seats, 17 reserved seats, and one technocrat seat in the year 2023. This increase in female representation has provided a platform for women to achieve prominent positions in government and influence positive change.

Pakistan's Constitution enshrines the state's commitment to equality in Article 25A, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and allows for special provisions to be made for women and children. Additionally, as a principle of policy, the Constitution mandates steps to ensure women's full participation in all spheres of national life (Article 34). Pakistan has also ratified the Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), further reinforcing its commitment to gender equality. Pakistan has adopted UN SDGs, goal 05 of which is related to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

On July 25, 2014, the Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reforms was formed with members from political parties that hold seats in the National Assembly and the Senate. The committee conducted a thorough review of election-related laws, consolidating some sections and replacing outdated provisions with new ones to ensure a more equitable, competitive, and peaceful electoral process. The Election Acts of 2017 saw the merger of eight laws, while new election regulations covering 15 chapters were developed. The law supports female participation by encouraging registration and voting. Additionally, it mandates that political parties field at least 5% female candidates in general elections. Furthermore, if fewer than 10% of votes in a constituency are cast by women, the ECP may view this as evidence that women were denied the right to vote. The election may be considered void in this situation.⁵

At the national and provincial levels, the Parliament of Pakistan established the Women Parliamentary Caucus to promote women's empowerment and gender equality. Now that there is a platform for female parliamentarians to discuss and resolve issues relating to gender equality, work together on legislative ideas, and push for legislative changes, these issues can be discussed and addressed. A piece of pro-women legislation passed by the Parliament is the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Amendment) Act, 2022. This law provides a framework for addressing workplace harassment and ensuring a secure working environment for women, fostering a supportive environment while improving protection from violence and harassment at work.

The Pakistani Parliament understands the importance of involvement of youth in politics and decision-making. The importance of Pakistan's young and the demand for their active involvement in the growth and development of the nation are acknowledged by the parliament. The National Assembly of Pakistan established a platform for young parliamentarians known as the "Young Parliamentarians Forum" (YPF). Members of Parliament who are under 45 years old at the time they take office are eligible for membership. The Forum comprised of 142 Members from all parliamentary parties in the National Assembly and Senate in the previous term of the Assembly. The YPF Board consists of six members, three from the treasury benches and three from the opposition benches, with each holding a specific position. Since its establishment in 2003, the YPF has been actively involved in providing youth perspectives on matters of public concern through legislation and organizing seminars and conferences at both national and international levels. The Forum operates independently of party politics and generates recommendations on topical issues that influence youth policies through dialogue and mutual consultation.

In Pakistan, the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) is a constitutional authority that advises on the conformity of laws with Islamic principles. The collaborative relationship between religious

⁵ PILDAT, *The election Act 2017, an overview* (PILDAT, February 2018).

authorities and the legislature exemplifies the enormous impact that religious authorities have in determining the development of legislation and regulations that uphold Islamic beliefs. The enduring partnership has its roots in Pakistan's constitution, which upholds democracy, human rights, and Islam as its guiding principle. The CII model can be applied to promote cooperation between lawmakers and religious leaders.

The Pakistani polio vaccination campaign serves as an illustration of the involvement of religious leaders. Although anti-vaccination actions pose a threat to Pakistan's polio vaccination program, religious leaders have been the nation's most trustworthy and powerful supporters in the campaign. This is due to the enormous network of religious organizations and their presence in rural and marginalized communities. Renowned and influential religious leaders have partnered with the National Islamic Advisory Group and provincial scholars' taskforces to eradicate polio. Religious Support communities from every denomination have contributed to social mobilization and community engagement to address vaccination refusal in certain areas.⁶

In the recent past, UNICEF and the Council of Islamic Ideology hosted a consultative meeting on menstrual hygiene management (MHM), which brought together over 300 scholars from diverse groups. Their objective was to collaborate with religious leaders throughout Pakistan and combat any misunderstandings regarding MHM, while promoting positive social change. The outcome of this engagement was the publication of a review of papers on the subject by Pakistan's Council of Islamic Ideology, as well as over a dozen articles that were featured in mainstream media.⁷

Globally, many organizations promote collaborations between religious actors and other stakeholders, which have led to advancements in gender equality and youth participation across different contexts. The Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Center (JICRC)⁸ is one such organization that was established in 2003 to address coexistence issues in the Middle East region and beyond. JICRC aims to provide guidance on peace-building based on religious beliefs, utilizing centuries of peaceful interfaith coexistence in Jordan and human rights principles as models for creating a better social, political, economic, cultural, and security environment. In Jordan, interfaith dialogues and youth-led initiatives have been leveraged by UN agencies, civil society organizations, and religious leaders to promote gender equality and youth engagement.

Collaborations between religious actors and community organizations have led to the success of initiatives promoting gender equality and youth engagement in Canada. The All-Party Interfaith Caucus in Canada, which is affiliated with the Canadian Interfaith Conversation (CIC), endeavors to facilitate discussions between Parliamentarians and religious representatives about shared concerns.⁹ The Canadian Council of Imams has collaborated with youth organizations to address issues like Islamophobia, promote interfaith dialogue, and encourage young Muslims to become involved in their communities. Faith leaders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) were able to significantly reduce intimate partner violence by collaborating in 15 villages over two years through activities promoting gender equality and youth engagement.¹⁰

4. Way Forward

Promoting gender equality and youth involvement requires the cooperation of religious leaders and lawmakers. Despite varied viewpoints within religious communities, many leaders are motivated to bringing about positive change because they understand the significance of these issues. Policies and programs that empower young people and promote gender equality can be

⁶ UNICEF, *Engagement with religious leaders in South Asia*, (Nepal: UNICEF, January 2020).

⁷ UNICEF, *Engagement with religious leaders*.

⁸ <http://www.coexistencejordan.org/programs.html>

⁹ <https://www.interfaithconversation.ca/all-party-parliamentary-interfaith-caucus>

¹⁰ <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/uk-aid-britain-republic-congo-drc-sexual-violence/>

developed by leveraging their resources and influence. Together, they can ensure that all young people's needs particularly those of girls and women are understood and addressed, fostering a more inclusive society where everyone has a chance to thrive.

- i. **Legislation and Policymaking:** Parliamentarians have the power to develop laws and policies that address gender inequity and empower youth. They can contribute in establishing a favorable environment for positive reforms by endorsing measures that promote gender equality and youth involvement. Religious leaders can collaborate with legislators to shape policy decisions and advocate for laws that reflect their shared beliefs, which can lead to greater gender parity and youth engagement.
- ii. **Parliamentary committees and inter-parliamentary commissions:** Parliament can interact with religious leaders through such platforms that encourage in-depth conversations and debates about cultural pluralism. This can lead to a better understanding of societal issues and help drive legislative action to address them. Progressive religious leaders that promote gender equality and youth empowerment can participate in these forums since their endorsement and advocacy have the potential to influence religious communities and facilitate legislative change. Furthermore, religious leaders' significant views and opinions can influence policy decisions. An All-Party Interfaith Caucus can help promote interaction among lawmakers and members of religious communities. This caucus can serve as a forum for in-depth interactive debate and cooperation on issues of shared interest. Such platform can encourage informal discourse in order to harness the ideas and experiences of religious communities in tackling specific public policy concerns. Insightful ideas can be exchanged and a forum for open discussion created, leading to more inclusive and informed decision-making processes. The caucuses can also be used to promote collaboration for successful policy outcomes on themes like gender equality, women empowerment, youth engagement, etc.
- iii. **Shared advocacy:** Legislators can promote gender equality and give young people a greater sense of power by supporting evidence-based policies that are in line with international standards and human rights principles. They can engage religious leaders to highlight the benefits of these measures. Furthermore, religious leaders can collaborate with lawmakers to promote inclusive policies that empower women and youth through their different platforms, question traditional gender roles and challenge gender stereotypes.
- iv. **Interfaith dialogue and structured partnerships:** Through interfaith dialogue, religious leaders and legislators can collaborate on promoting gender equality and youth involvement. They can promote inclusive policies that benefit all segments of society by working together across religious boundaries and promoting common values. Structured connections between legislators and religious leaders are crucial for implementing effective and long-term development goals. This can be accomplished by engaging religious leaders in the planning, implementation and monitoring phases of the program cycle. This way, religious communities' support and engagement may be guaranteed while also taking their perspectives and interests into account.
- v. **Promote Inclusivity and Gender Balance:** With the assistance of religious leaders, policies might be put in place to guarantee that MPs are more reflective of society in terms of language, religion, gender, age, and ethnicity. Religious leaders can encourage diversity and solicit their supporters in the political sphere. They might support policies promoting affirmative action and different representation provisions in order to promote gender equality and youth engagement. They may encourage religious communities to embrace diversity and support the participation of all groups in parliament by setting an example for them.
- vi. **High level Advocacy:** High-level advocacy efforts with religious leaders may mobilize a huge network to spread messages on gender equality and young participation in parliament. This outreach can cover an array of media, focus on key target groups like

- political leaders, and eventually help to create a social movement to support positive gender-related behavior.
- vii. **Public awareness raising and education:** Religious leaders and parliamentarians can use their public remarks, sermons and social media presence to promote gender equality and youth engagement. They have the ability to address misconceptions, promote gender-sensitive opinions and inspire young people to participate actively in social and political spheres through these platforms.
 - viii. **Grassroots engagement:** Local communities can actively promote gender equality and youth involvement through workshops, seminars, and community debates organized by religious leaders and parliamentarians. These projects can increase awareness about the importance of these issues while also ensuring that the solutions proposed are relevant and sustainable by involving community members in the decision-making process.
 - ix. **Evidence-Based Research to create safe spaces for dialogues:** Through cooperation between parliamentary and religious actors, safe spaces for dialogue and inclusive platforms can be established. Key players will have an opportunity to participate in conversations and develop plans relating to religious and cultural diversity, including youth representatives, religious leaders, and legislators. These places can encourage cooperation, improve understanding, and lead to joint activities that promote gender equality and youth empowerment. Parliamentarians and religious leaders can work together to increase awareness and understanding of how religion affects societal attitudes towards gender equality. This collaboration can be achieved by carrying out joint research, examining case studies, and producing evidence that can guide program priorities, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as results assessment.
 - x. **Promote Civic engagement:** Collaboration between religious leaders and lawmakers may be an effective tool for encouraging political participation and civic engagement in the communities they represent. Activities such as organizing voter registration drives, public forums, and training on democratic procedures can help to achieve these objectives. Furthermore, religious actors can increase awareness about gender equality, human rights, and the needs of young people in their communities through initiatives that highlight the compatibility of these ideals with religious teachings. These efforts, by emphasizing shared aims, can help develop a more engaged and educated population.
 - xi. **Joint Advocacy:** Joint advocacy on key concerns for women and youth can increase cooperation between religious actors and legislators. Faith actors can improve their interactions with families and communities while also broadening their reach by agreeing on principles and approaches connected to social and behavioral change. The collaboration has the potential to benefit both faith-based initiatives and activism efforts.

5. Conclusion

The effectiveness of relationships between religious actors and politicians is largely dependent on open communication, mutual respect and a desire to learn from one another. Such partnerships can forge powerful coalitions that support gender equality and enable young people to significantly impact society. Joint initiatives that take advantage of the unique strengths and viewpoints of both parties might provide beneficial results in achieving common objectives. For these initiatives to continue to advance, procedures for continued collaboration and open channels of communication must be established. Establishing mechanisms for ongoing collaboration and maintaining dialogue on regular basis at different tiers (local, provincial and national) are essential for sustained progress towards our common future based on the famous proverb – Live and Let Live, for human emancipation and resilient development of all members of community especially the vulnerable strata comprising the poor, women and the youth.

INFORMATION

An update of International Developments (March-April, 2024)

Compiled by
Ayesha Tariq Khan
 Assistant Director, Research

- **March, 01, 2024:** Iran successfully launched its remote sensing satellite 'Pars-I' into orbit, using the Russian Soyuz rocket. This satellite was manufactured by Iran domestically and three cameras are equipped in it. Its aim is to scan the topography of Iran, from an orbit of 500km.¹
- **March 04, 2024:** Shehbaz Sharif became the 24th Prime Minister of Pakistan for the second time. He secured 201 parliamentary votes, whereas his opponent, Omer Ayub from PTI Party, secured only 92 votes.²
- **March 06, 2024:** The UN International Organization for Migration (IOM) released a report, mentioning that the year 2023 was the deadliest year for the migrants with at least 8,565 deaths. This shows that the percentage of migrant deaths was increased by 20% from the year 2022.³
- **March 06, 2024:** Maldives signed an agreement with China to get free non-lethal military gear and also training from the Chinese army. The main aim of this agreement is to strengthen the autonomy of the Island as well as acquire independence in the Indian Ocean.⁴
- **March 08, 2024:** The chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee of UK, Alicia Kearns, visited Egypt and Saudi Arabia. She showed her deep concerns about the humanitarian situation in Gaza, while she visited the Egypt- Gaza border, 'Al Arish'.⁵
- **March 12, 2024:** The Parliament of China reviewed a law in order to grant the Communist Party more executive control successfully over the State Council, after abandoning the post-parliament news conference of Chinese Premier for the first time in three decades.⁶
- **March 15, 2024:** Russia launched a missile attack on Ukrainian city Odesa, resulting in killing of around 20 people and wounding more than 70 people. The missile attack consisted of two ballistic missile attacks, on the residential area of the city.⁷

¹ "Iran's Pars 1 satellite enters space after Russian launch", *Reuters*, February 29, 2024. <https://www.reuters.com/technology/space/irans-pars-1-satellite-enters-space-after-russian-launch-2024-02-29/>

² "Pakistan: Shehbaz Sharif wins second term as prime minister", *BBC*, March 03, 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-68462846>

³ "Deadliest Year on Record for Migrants with Nearly 8,600 Deaths in 2023", *IOM*, March 06, 2024. <https://www.iom.int/news/deadliest-year-record-migrants-nearly-8600-deaths-2023>

⁴ "Maldives to receive 'non-lethal' weapons from China under new deal", *First Post*, March 06, 2024. <https://www.firstpost.com/world/maldives-to-receive-non-lethal-weapons-from-china-under-new-deal-13746002.html>

⁵ "Foreign Affairs Committee 'deeply concerned' about Egypt-Gaza border crisis", *Parliament UK*, March 08, 2024. <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/78/foreign-affairs-committee/news/200335/foreign-affairs-committee-deeply-concerned-about-egyptgaza-border-crisis/>

⁶ "Communist Party gets more control over China's cabinet", *Dawn*, March 12, 2024. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1820919>

⁷ "20 Killed in Russian Missile Attack on Odesa, More Than 70 Injured", *VOA*, March 15, 2024. <https://www.voanews.com/a/ukraine-russia-launch-drone-and-missile-attacks/7529088.html>

- **March 17, 2024:** The EU and Egypt have come to an agreement to advance their collaboration to a strategic and all-inclusive level, which will be based on the principles of equity, respect and trust. The two parties have reaffirmed their commitments to strengthen their long-lasting relationship with the purpose of developing their shared stability, peace and prosperity.⁸
- **March 17, 2024:** According to UNRWA reports, the Israeli forces only facilitated 25% of the aid to reach Gaza Strip in February. Till the March 15th, only 165 aid truck on daily average could cross the Israeli border to reach Gaza strip, which remains below the operational capacity. The average of trucks to cross border is around 500 trucks per day.⁹
- **March 18, 2024:** Vladimir Putin secures his 5th term as the President of Russia for six more years after the preordained elections. Putin secured around 87.3% of the vote, with a record voting turnout of 77.5%.¹⁰
- **March 19, 2024:** The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) released a report stating that the year 2023 was the warmest year on record, with the average global temperature at 1.45 °Celsius, above the pre-industrial baseline. On record, the decade was the warmest ten-year period.¹¹
- **March 21, 2024:** For the first time, the UN approved its resolution on Artificial Intelligence. The UNGA has suggested to set international guidelines for addressing the benefits and risks related to AI. Its aim is to protect the personal data, safeguard human rights, and monitor risks of AI.¹²
- **March 21, 2024:** Correspondence was published by the UK Foreign Affairs Committee, showing extreme frustration on holding of UK aid which was sent for Gaza. UK's Foreign Secretary, David Cameron, said that the Israeli forces are holding up the aid sent by the UK to Gaza without any reasons, and forcing it to go through lengthy clearance procedures.¹³
- **March 25, 2024:** According to the report of an influential think tank, the Pentagon and Congress have limited window to properly create a Cyber Force. Therefore, they recommended Congress to have a proper military Cyber Force.¹⁴
- **March 27, 2024:** The 148th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly and related meetings took place in Geneva, Switzerland from March 23 to March 27, 2024. The general debate of this

⁸ "Joint Declaration on the Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership between The Arab Republic of Egypt and the European Union", *EU*, March 17, 2024. https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/joint-declaration-strategic-and-comprehensive-partnership-between-arab-republic-egypt-and-european-2024-03-17_en

⁹ "UNRWA Situation Report #91 on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem", *Relief Web*, March 17, 2024. <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/unrwa-situation-report-91-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem-all-information-14-16-march-2024-valid-16-march-2024-2230-enar>

¹⁰ "Putin secures 5th term as Russia's president after preordained election", *Pbs*, March 18, 2024. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/putin-secures-5th-term-as-russias-president-after-preordained-election>

¹¹ "State of the Global Climate 2023", *WMO*, March 19, 2024. <https://wmo.int/publication-series/state-of-global-climate-2023#:~:text=The%20WMO%20report%20confirmed%20that,ten%2Dyear%20period%20on%20record.>

¹² "UN approves its first resolution on artificial intelligence", *Al Jazeera*, March 21, 2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/21/the-un-approves-its-first-resolution-on-artificial-intelligence#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20General%20Assembly,the%20safeguarding%20of%20human%20rights.>

¹³ "Foreign Secretary: "enormous frustration" at arbitrary denials of aid by Israel", *UK Parliament*, March 21, 2024. <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/78/foreign-affairs-committee/news/200588/foreign-secretary-enormous-frustration-at-arbitrary-denials-of-aid-by-israel/>

¹⁴ "Pentagon, Congress have a 'limited window' to properly create a Cyber Force", *The Record*, March 25, 2024. <https://therecord.media/military-cyber-force-study-fdd>

year's IPU Assembly focused on the theme 'Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding'. Parliamentary delegations from all over the world attended the meetings and discussed on numerous topics related to the main theme.¹⁵

- **April 07, 2024:** Israel has pulled out its ground troops from the southern side of Gaza for tactical reasons. This step raised questions on the future direction of war, as Israel and Hamas delegations travelled to Egypt for a new round of ceasefire talk.¹⁶
- **April 09, 2024:** South Korea launched its second spy satellite into space, as North Korea threatened to do it before. Both sides of Korea already launched spy satellites, one each, into space last year. The second spy satellite was launched from Kennedy Space Center in Florida.¹⁷
- **April 10, 2024:** UK and Ukraine have signed on the mutual agreement in order to cooperate in the defense and arms production sector. The aim of the agreement is to strengthen the domestic weapons industry of Ukraine during the ongoing conflict with Russia.¹⁸
- **April 12, 2024:** On March 20, China launched a key signal relay satellite 'Queqiao-2' and two miniature satellites 'Tiandu-1' and 'Tiandu-2'. According to China National Space Administration (CNSA), their launch was successful, and this operation will serve as the communication bridge for its future lunar investigation missions for coming years.¹⁹
- **April 14, 2024:** Iran launched massive attack consisting of 300 drone and missile attacks on Israel. Iran called these series of attack as 'Operation True Promise'. According to Israeli Government, they have neutralized 99% of Iranian attacks.²⁰
- **April 15, 2024:** Donald Trump will be the first former president in the history of US to face the criminal trial, known as 'Hush Money Trial'. The trial is about to start on Monday April 22, 2024. The trial main clause is that Donald Trump allegedly paid adult film actress Stormy Daniels in the lead-up to his election win in 2016.²¹
- **April 23, 2024:** The US Senate approved a 95 billion dollars aid, which will be sent to Ukraine, Taiwan and Israel. The bill was passed with the 79 votes in favor, and 18 against it.²²

¹⁵ "148th Assembly and related meetings", IPU. <https://www.ipu.org/event/148th-assembly-and-related-meetings>

¹⁶ "Israel withdraws troops from southern Gaza for 'tactical reasons'", *The Guardian*, April 07, 2024. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/07/israel-withdraws-troops-from-southern-gaza-for-tactical-reasons>

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PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS

National Assembly of Pakistan recognizes International Earthday

April 22, 2024

RESOLUTION

22-4-24

This House recognizes this day as the International Earth Day, Government of Pakistan recognizes the critical importance of protecting our planet's environment and ecosystems, whereas the damaging impact of plastic pollution on Pakistan's environment.

Ministry of Climate Change recognizes the paramount importance of preserving our planet's environment and ecosystems, whereas the theme of "Planet vs Plastic" emphasizes the urgent need to combat plastic pollution and safeguard our planet's health.

Plastic pollution poses a significant threat to Pakistan's environment, wildlife, and public health, coordinated efforts from citizens, organizations, and Government entities are essential to address the planetary menace of plastic pollution.

Sd/-

Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar,

Minister for Law and Justice, Human Rights and Parliamentary Affairs

Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam,

Ms. Shahida Begum,

Ms. Sehar Kamran,

Shazia Marri,

Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary,

Sahibzada Muhammad Hamid Raza,

Syeda Amnah Batool,

Malik Muhammad Aamir Dogar,

Ms. Samina Khalid Ghurki,

Syed Waseem Hussain,

Ms. Rana Ansar,

Members National Assembly

Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services

RESEARCH ON DEMAND PERFORMA

Members Name: _____

House/Assembly: _____

Contact No/Email: _____

(on which the research product had to be submitted)

Address: _____

PURPOSE/TYPE OF SERVICE REQUIRED (Tick requisite product):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Parliamentary Brief (1-3 pg) | _____ |
| 2. Briefing Paper (2500 words): | _____ |
| 3. Evidence-based Research Paper: | _____ |
| 4. Analysis of Law/Bill: | _____ |
| 5. Briefing on a Topic: | _____ |
| 6. Material for Speech: | _____ |

TOPIC: _____

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT: _____

DETAILS: _____

i. Confidential: _____ or ii. Generic: _____ (Tick any one)

PLEASE SEND THIS COMPLETED/FILLED FORM TO:

- a. Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS), Research Wing, Sector F 5/2, Attaturk Avenue, Islamabad. Contact: 92 51 9091000

OR

- b. PIPS Parliamentary Resource Centre (PRC) Parliamentary Lodges, Islamabad,
- c. PIPS Parliamentary Resource Center (PRC), Provincial Assembly Balochistan, of Zarghun Road, Model Town, Quetta, Contact: +92 081 9204199
- d. PIPS Parliamentary Resource Center (PRC), Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Building, Peshawar, Contact: +92 091 9210489
- e. PIPS Parliamentary Resource Center (PRC), Provincial Assembly of Punjab, MPA Hostel, Adjacent to Assembly Building Lahore, Contact: +92 042 99200335
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PAKISTAN INSTITUTE FOR PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

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Committee Name (in case of Legislative Business):

Contact information in case of need for clarification and for delivery:

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Residential address:

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MEMBERS SIGNATURES:

PLEASE TICK ANY ONE OF REQUIRED DEMAND:

☐**Legislative Business**☐**Existing Ordinance/Act**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Analysis
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Title of the Bill:

.....

.....

☐**New Bill**

Title of the Bill:

.....

.....

Purpose of the Bill:

.....

.....

Non-Legislative Business

<input type="checkbox"/>	Question	<input type="checkbox"/>	Motion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	Calling Attention Notice				

Legislative Research

<input type="checkbox"/>	Pre-Legislation Research	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post-Legislation Research
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Research Reports

<input type="checkbox"/>	Comparative Study	<input type="checkbox"/>	Analytical Study	<input type="checkbox"/>	Informational Brief
<input type="checkbox"/>	Critical Evaluation & Appraisal				

Deadline

<input type="checkbox"/>	3 days	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 week
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 weeks

Chart showing the timeframe required for completion of request:

1 to 3 days	7 to 14 days	25 days
Question Motion Resolution Calling Attention Notice Informational Brief	➤ Amendment of Ordinance/Act ➤ Assessment of Ordinance/Act ➤ Analysis of Ordinance/Act ➤ Post-Legislation Research ➤ Comparative Study ➤ Analytical Study ➤ Critical Evaluation & Appraisal	➤ Drafting of New Bill ➤ Pre-Legislation Research

Honourable Member may furnish maximum (2) requests at one time so that all Honourable Members may get the opportunity to avail the services offered by the Institute.

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Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) organized orientation programme, for the newly elected members of the National Assembly of Pakistan on Wednesday, April 17, 2024.



PAKISTAN INSTITUTE FOR PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

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