

**ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE PARLIAMENTARY POLITICS  
OF PAKISTAN: A CASE STUDY OF THE 15TH NATIONAL  
ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN**

---

**BY**

**UME RAQIA**

**REGISTRATION # 18002203017**

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Department of History & Pakistan Studies**



---

**UNIVERSITY OF GUJRAT**  
**Session 2022-2024**

**UME RAQIA**

**Master of Philosophy**

**2022-2024**

**ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE PARLIAMENTARY  
POLITICS OF PAKISTAN: A CASE STUDY OF THE  
15TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN**

---

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Award of Degree of**

**Master of Philosophy**

**In**

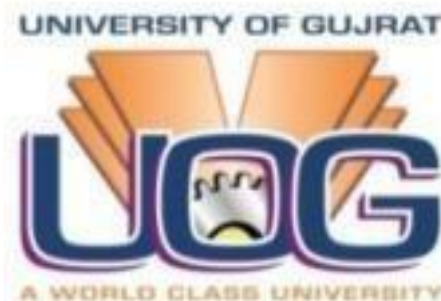
**History**

**BY**

**UME RAQIA**

**REGISTRATION # 18002203017**

**Department of History & Pakistan Studies**



---

**UNIVERSITY OF GUJRAT  
Session 2022-2024**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I praise Allah Almighty, whose uncountable blessings made this journey possible.

I am profoundly thankful to my Supervisor, Dr. Mushtaque Ali Abbasi, for his guidance, patience, and expertise throughout this research. I sincerely thank the Head of Department, Dr. Ghulam Shabbir, for his utmost guidance and support throughout the journey. I am also grateful to Dr. Muhammad Kashif Ali for his dynamic teaching method. The invaluable lessons imparted by each of you will remain in my memory for a lifetime, shaping my thoughts and actions. Your wisdom and guidance have left a profound impact on me, and I am deeply grateful for the knowledge you've shared. I also want to thank Sir Zaman Ali, for providing a home-like environment in the department.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to my friends for the countless moments of joy and laughter we've shared together. Your encouragement and support have been a constant source of strength in my life. Whether during times of celebration or challenges, knowing I have such amazing friends by my side has made all the difference. Thank you for being there, for lifting my spirits, and for creating memories that I will cherish forever.

Lastly, I want to thank my family. I express deepest gratitude to my parents for their trust and support, which gave me the courage to persevere. Thank you, Phopho, for your boundless love. Heartful thanks to my siblings: my little brothers for your countless rides to university (even on foggy and rainy days!), and my younger sister for your love.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to all those who contributed to my journey of eighteen years of education and the completion of the thesis. This thesis is not just my effort but a testament to the kindness, trust, and support of everyone mentioned here. Any shortcomings or errors remain my own.

**(Ume Raqia)**

## **DEDICATION**

To all the men who uplift and empower their daughters, sisters, and wives—your encouragement and support are crucial in helping them pursue their dreams and aspirations. By standing beside them, you play a vital role in fostering an environment where they can strive for greatness and reach their full potential.

**(Ume Raqia)**

## DECLARATION

I, Ume Raqia, Roll # 22011703-003 MPhil History Scholar, Department of History & Pakistan Studies, The Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Gujrat, Pakistan hereby affirm that this thesis entitled “Role of Women in the Parliamentary Politics of Pakistan: A Case Study of the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan” is original work of the author and has not been submitted to any publication media and has not been published or submitted for any other degree at other university. Also, I shall not use this thesis to obtain any other degree with this University or any other University.

I also realize that if there is any case of plagiarism in this thesis at any time it will be detected even after the degree's award, the university may cancel and revoke the degree.

**(Ume Raqia)**

I hereby confirm that Ume Raqia, Roll # 22011703-003 MPhil History Scholar, Department of History & Pakistan Studies, The Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Gujrat, Pakistan, did and worked under my supervision, and to the best of my knowledge, the above statement is correct.

---

Dr. Mushtaque Ali Abbasi  
Lecturer,  
Department of History & Pakistan Studies  
University of Gujrat. Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan  
Email: [Mushtaque.abbasi@uog.edu.pk](mailto:Mushtaque.abbasi@uog.edu.pk)  
Dated:

## THESIS COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is the certificate that this thesis namely “Role of Women in the Parliamentary Politics of Pakistan: A Case Study of the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan” by Ume Raqia, Roll # 22011703-003 MPhil History Scholar, Department of History & Pakistan Studies, The Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Gujrat, Pakistan is evaluated and accepted from the award of degree “Masters of Philosophy” in History by the following member.

The evaluation report is available in the Directorate of Advance Studies and Research Board of the University as mentioned above.

---

Prof. Dr. Mehboob Hussain (External Examiner)  
Professor  
Department of History  
University of the Punjab, Lahore,  
Email:- [Chairman.history@pu.edu.pk](mailto:Chairman.history@pu.edu.pk)

---

Dr. Mushtaque Ali Abbasi (Research Supervisor)  
Lecturer,  
Department of History & Pakistan Studies  
University of Gujrat. Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan  
Email: [Mushtaque.abbasi@uog.edu.pk](mailto:Mushtaque.abbasi@uog.edu.pk)  
Dated:

---

Dr. Ghulam Shabbir (HOD)  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of History & Pakistan Studies  
University of Gujrat. Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan  
Email: [ghulam.shabbir@uog.edu.pk](mailto:ghulam.shabbir@uog.edu.pk)  
Dated:

## CERTIFICATE OF PLAGIARISM

It is certified that MPhil Thesis Titled " Role of Women in the Parliamentary Politics of Pakistan: A Case Study of the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan " by name been examined by us. We undertake the follows:

- a. Thesis have significant new work/knowledge as compared to already published or are under consideration to be published elsewhere. No sentence, equation, diagram, table, paragraph, or section has been copied verbatim from previous work unless it is placed under quotation marks and duly referenced.
- b. The work presented is original and own work of the author (i.e. there is no plagiarism). No ideas, processes, results, or words of others have been presented as Author own work.
- c. There is no fabrication of data or results which have been compiled/analyzed.
- d. There is no falsification by manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.
- e. The thesis has been checked using TURNITIN (copy of originality report attached) and found within limits as per HEC plagiarism Policy and instructions issued from time to time.
- f. While generating the Turnitin report, nothing has been excluded from Abstract to Conclusion parts of the thesis.

---

Ume Raqia  
22011703-003  
Department of History & Pakistan Studies  
University of Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan

---

Dr. Mushtaque Ali Abbasi (Research Supervisor)  
Lecturer,  
Department of History & Pakistan Studies  
University of Gujrat. Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan  
Email: [Mushtaque.abbasi@uog.edu.pk](mailto:Mushtaque.abbasi@uog.edu.pk)  
Dated:

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

---

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
ABSTRACT-----	01
CHAPTER-01 INTRODUCTION-----	02
1.1 Literature Review-----	05
1.2 Objectives of the Research-----	08
1.3 Research Questions-----	08
1.4 Research Methodology-----	08
1.5 Limitations of the Study-----	09
1.6 Expected Outcomes-----	09
CHAPTER-02 EVOLUTION OF THE PARLIAMENT AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS-----	10
2.1 Introduction-----	10
2.2 Origin and Development of the Parliament-----	10
2.3 Representation of Women in the Parliament: A Global View-----	12
2.4 The Quest for Parliamentary System in British India-----	13
2.5 Women in the Parliament of British India-----	15
2.6 Parliamentary Politics of Pakistan: The Representation of Women-----	15
2.6.1 Women Parliamentarians (1949-1958)-----	16
2.6.2 Women Parliamentarians (1962-1969)-----	17
2.6.3 Women Parliamentarians (1970-1977)-----	18
2.6.4 Women Parliamentarians during 1985-88-----	19
2.6.5 Women Parliamentarians during 1988-1999-----	20
2.6.6 Women Parliamentarians during 2002-2007-----	22
2.6.7 Women Parliamentarians during 2008-2018-----	23
2.7 Conclusion-----	24
CHAPTER-03 THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE 15 <sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN-----	25
3.1. The 15 <sup>th</sup> National Assembly-----	25
3.2. Representation of Women in the 15 <sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan-----	26
3.3. Profile of Women MNAs-----	27
3.4. Women in the Federal Cabinet of the 15 <sup>th</sup> National Assembly-----	28
3.5. Standing Committees under the 15 <sup>th</sup> National Assembly and the Role of Women-----	29
3.6. Women as the Parliamentary Secretaries-----	29
3.7. Women on the Panel of Chairpersons-----	30

---

3.8. Attendance of the Female MNAs-----	30
3.9. Participation of Women in National Assembly Business-----	31
3.9.1. Women's Participation in Calling Attention Notices (CANs) -----	31
3.9.2. Participation in Question Answer Session-----	33
3.9.3. Speeches of Women Legislators-----	34
3.10. Conclusion-----	36
CHAPTER-04 WOMEN-LED LEGISLATIVE REFORMS IN THE 15 <sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN: IMPACTS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF BILLS-----	37
4.1. Introduction-----	37
4.2. The Zainab Alert Act, Response and Recovery Act, 2020 (ACT XV 2020)--	37
4.3. National Commission on the Status of Women (Amendment) Act 2021 (Act No. XIX of 2021) -----	40
4.4. The Islamabad Capitol Territory Domestic Worker Act, 2022-----	42
4.5 The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2020-----	44
4.6 The Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2020-----	46
4.7 Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act, 2021-----	49
4.8 Conclusion-----	52
CHAPTER-05 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE-----	53
5.1. Introduction-----	53
5.2. Paramount Challenges Faced by the Parliamentarians-----	53
5.2.1. Socio-Cultural Barriers-----	54
5.2.2. Economic Challenges-----	54
5.2.3. Role of Media-----	55
5.2.4. Psychological Constraints-----	56
5.2.5. Discrimination by the Political Parties-----	56
5.2.6 The Problems of Reserved Seats-----	57
5.2.7. Lack of Training and Capacity Building-----	58
5.2.8. Lack of Women Representation in Key Decision-Making Positions-----	58
5.2.9. Barriers Inside Parliament Business-----	58
5.3. Recommendations for the Future to Improve Inclusivity of Women-----	59
CHAPTER-06 CONCLUSION-----	61
REFERENCES-----	65

---

**LIST OF APPENDIXES**

---

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
APPENDIX-01 ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE THESIS-----	75
APPENDIX-02 <i>TURNITIN</i> ORIGINALITY REPORT-----	76
APPENDIX-03 <i>Artificial Intelligence Report</i> -----	87

---

## **ABSTRACT**

The political phenomena of Pakistan are very complex and related to gender equality. Traditionalists' approach remained unfavorable for women to be empowered; instead, they threatened women to play a role in the socioeconomic and political development of the country. For the true essence of democracy and to eliminate gender discrimination, women's role in politics is necessary. In Pakistan's political history, the government outlawed gender discrimination through Article 25 of the 1973 constitution. Besides, new avenues for women in the civil services, sports, culture, and the media were also opened. However, before that, their participation in politics was relatively low. Gender quotas were introduced in the legislative institutions under the 1973 constitution and were further increased during the Musharraf regime. Despite a constitutional right in politics, women are still far behind in the political mechanism of Pakistan in comparison with their gender counterparts.

This research highlights women's participation and role in Pakistan's Parliamentary politics. It also investigates and analyzes the role of female Parliamentarians, especially in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan, concerning how women Parliamentarians contributed to the legislative process and what challenges they faced. The research highlights the impact, scope, and nature of legislation rendered by women in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan. The research focuses on a qualitative approach with historical, analytical, and descriptive methods. During the study, both primary and secondary data were consulted. Along with existing secondary data, official records including Election Commission of Pakistan official record, National Assembly Debates of the prescribed time, Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) reports, Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) surveys and reports, Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) record, Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) reports and Interviews related to study, are also consulted to analyze the content.

### **INTRODUCTION**

This study endeavors to understand and analyze the contribution of female Members of the National Assembly (MNA) in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan. Women's participation has remained low in Pakistan's Parliamentary politics since its inception. A few women got to reach Parliament, but what role do these women play in reducing the gender gap is a question of importance. This research attempts to analyze the female contribution to Parliament by looking through the lens of the evidence of their performance in the National Assembly. However, despite its criticality, little attempt has been made to understand and examine the fundamental question of: to what extent women may contribute to addressing the country's political problems? and to what degree their legislative endeavors play a role in the socioeconomic and political growth of the country? Besides, the research analyzes and assesses the performance of women in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly in initiating bills, their deliberations on different policy issues, and so on.

Parliament is an important institution—a meeting place for the government branches and the opposition to make laws and represent their constituencies in the policy-making process. Parliament originated in Saxon times during the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It evolved and developed in four main stages to the present Parliamentary structure. Parliamentary politics varies in different countries. In South Asia, it has roots in the British Parliamentary system, which developed over time (Hussain, 2019).

Over time, different measures were taken all over the world to enhance women's representation in Parliamentary politics, such as reserving quota seats for women in Parliament. Women Parliamentarians play a significant role and are instrumental in advocating women's rights in politics, services, public life, and inheritance, as well as their representation in the Parliament. In the recent past, Finland was the first European country to advocate women's political rights. Their representation in the Parliament through their right to participate in elections for the first time in European history. The average ratio of female representation in the lower chamber of Parliament is about 26 %.

Soon after decolonization, South Asian countries such as Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka applied a Parliamentary form of government with some modifications to suit their specific social and political dynamics. For example, India became the first to become a federal Parliamentary democratic republic under the 1950 Indian Constitution. In India, reserve seats for women in Parliament and local government bodies were also introduced through constitutional

amendments. Similarly, Pakistan adopted a Parliamentary system under the 1956 and 1973 constitutions. However, the 1962 constitution outlined the federal republic with extensive powers to the president. After its creation in 1971, Bangladesh adopted the Parliamentary system, characterized by periods of democratic government and authoritarian regimes. Sri Lanka also adopted a Parliamentary system after gaining freedom from British rule. In Sri Lanka, women's representation in Parliament has been influenced by various factors such as ethnicity, class, and religion. Still, the country has seen female leaders such as Chandrika Kumaratunga, president and prime minister. Despite this, overall, their participation remains relatively low. In 1960, Sirimavo Bandaranaike was the first female prime minister of Sri Lanka (Karkl, 2023). Nepal has the highest ratio of 32.7 % among the South Asian countries. However, women's significant representation in the Parliamentary system of British India was not experienced. The legislative branches, such as the Council of Governor General and provincial councils, were predominantly male represented. Despite this significant challenge, women performed a vital role in the struggle for independence.

After independence, Pakistan intended to provide a space for women in legislative politics, but the pace was slow. In the formative phase of Pakistan, women's role in politics was constrained by traditionalist ideology. However, Bhutto's glimpses of egalitarian society provided a new breath to women's political empowerment. However, women faced challenges whenever traditionalists co-opted with authoritarians.

In Pakistan, after introducing the quota system in the provincial and national assemblies, a substantial improvement has been observed in the number of female members of Parliament. Bangladesh has also implemented vital measures to boost women's involvement in politics and reserved seats in Parliament.

Women comprise 49.52 percent of Pakistan's population (World Bank, 2022) and play a pivotal role in every sphere of society, from day-to-day life to state affairs. Unfortunately, women's representation in Parliament did not remain the same in numbers as in society, which is almost half the population. Looking into the women's history in the Parliament, only two women were in the first Constituent Assembly: Begum JahanAra Shah Nawaz and Begum Shaeesta Ikram Ullah. In the Second Constituent Assembly, there were no women representatives. The Second Constituent Assembly successfully gave a constitution of Pakistan in 1956. In this constitution, ten seats were held in reserve for women in the unicameral legislature, five from each East and West wing of Pakistan.

Martial law was enforced in Pakistan, and the 1956 constitution was repealed. In the 1962 constitution, under Ayub Khan's martial law, six seats were designated for women, three from

each wing. In the third and fourth National Assemblys of Pakistan, six women were representatives in the legislative body. In the 5th National Assembly, seven women were in Parliament, six of which were allocated seats for general females and one for reserved seats for minorities.

In 1973, a constitutional bicameral legislative system was introduced, and ten seats were designated for women under the quota system. Ten women were on reserved seats in the 6th National Assembly, and one was voted for a general seat, but this assembly was dissolved. Under the martial law of Zia-ul-Haq, reserved seats for women were doubled from ten to twenty in the Eighth Amendment. In the 7<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, twenty-one women were represented. In the eighth National Assembly, twenty-four women representatives were present, including Benazir Bhutto, who held the seat of Prime Minister as a female in Pakistan. The 8th Assembly had two women; in the 9<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, only four women were represented in Parliament. In the 11<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, six women got the representation.

Pervaiz Musharraf imposed martial law, and reserved seats for women were expanded to sixty. In the 12<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, seventy-four women participated in the Parliament. In the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, seventy-six women were elected in National Assembly. It was the first time a woman “Fahmida Mirza” was chosen as the 18<sup>th</sup> speaker of the lower chamber of Parliament.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, there are a total of 69-70 women in the National Assembly eight to nine are elected directly. Sunila Ruth represented the women on the reserved seats for the minorities and sixty on the reserved seats for women. Pakistan ranks in the world for the participation of females in Parliaments and was 116th on the 2021 UN report map. Female members of the National Assembly actively participated in proceeding agendas, bills, and debates. In 2019-20, 79 percent was the average ratio for women attendance. On average, every woman participated in a discussion for eleven minutes. The females in the National Assembly sponsored thirty-three percent of the total agendas in 2019-20. The female lawmakers introduced fifty-one out of the 302 bills, and the engagement of both men and women legislators introduced twenty-six bills. In 2020-2021, out of 254 bills, fifty-eight were initiated by the female members. Thirty percent of resolutions and twenty-seven percent were raised by women in the assembly. Women members of the National Assembly sponsored thirty-eight percent of agendas and almost half of the private bills introduced by women in 2021-22. Next year's performance was virtually like the previous year (FAFEN).

## 1.1 Literature Review

Primary and secondary data are available to explore women's role in Pakistan's Parliamentary politics. An extensive account of primary literature in the form of official records, including the debates, archives, and proceedings of the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan, is available. Interviews of women Parliamentarians are another valuable account of primary data that is significant for having insight into the experiences, contributions, and challenges they faced in the Parliament. A vast amount of literature is also available and helpful in the form of secondary sources, including books, articles, and biographies of the Parliamentarians to explore their experiences as politicians. FAFEN publishes its report every year on the performance of women Parliamentarians, which can be a rich source of information on the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan. Alongside FAFEN, PILDAT, and PIPS, yearly reports and research can help the literature. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) official website is a significant source of information about women in the Parliament.

Historians and legal scholars have long studied how Parliament evolved into a key political institution. Richardson's work "*The Origin of Parliament*" traces its journey from informal royal councils to an organized legislative body. Originally, "Parliament" referred to meetings of rulers and nobles across Europe, mainly for legal and administrative purposes. Over time, these gatherings became structured assemblies with decision-making powers. England's Parliament was influenced by French and Italian practices, where similar councils existed. English kings regularly consulted nobles by the 12th and 13th centuries, blending law and governance. Richardson explores how these meetings gradually formalized, shaping the current Parliamentary system (Richardson, 1928).

Sir Courtenay Ilbert's book "*Parliament: Its History, Constitution And Practice*" explores how the British Parliament evolved from medieval councils into today's powerful institutions. He explains how kings once relied on nobles for advice, but these gatherings took on a more significant role in law-making over time. The book highlights key moments, like the rise of the House of Commons and significant reforms that shaped democracy. Ilbert also examines how elections, political power, and decision-making changed over the years. His work helps us understand how Parliament grew into a system that balances authority and representation, making it a cornerstone of modern governance (Ilbert, 1911).

Anuradha Jaiswal's article, "*The Evolution of Women's Movement in Colonial India,*" explores how women's activism grew and evolved from the late 19th century up to India's independence in 1947. Initially, efforts to improve women's status were led by men, seeking reforms in education and social rights. Over time, women themselves began organizing and leading

movements, particularly in nationalist struggles and legal advocacy. Groups like the All India Women's Conference and the Women's Indian Association played a crucial role. Jaiswal describes this period as India's first-wave feminism, highlighting its achievements in shaping gender roles and advancing women's rights despite ongoing societal challenges.

*The Role of Women Parliamentarians in Pakistani Politics (1970-1988)*, an unpublished PhD Dissertation by Ghazala Nawaz, provides literature on the role of females in the political system of Pakistan. Her study highlights the representation and contribution of female MNAs in the Parliament. This is an excellent source of knowledge regarding the efforts and contributions made by the women Parliamentarians in Pakistan from 1970- 88. It will be a significant and helpful source for the present study to understand the part of women in the legislation process of Pakistan (Nawaz, 2014).

*Finding Our Way: Reading On Women in Pakistan* by Fareeha Zafar (ed.) provides a study of the historical context and briefly discusses politics after the establishment of Pakistan. It sheds light on Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan's political participation and contribution. It provides information about the growth of women's politics in the subcontinent. It also explains the status of women in the first two decades of Pakistan's history, specifically the Ayub Khan regime (Zafar,1993).

K. Mumtaz and F. Shaheed's *Women of Pakistan: Two steps forward, one step back?* is a source of information on the current study. It provides a detailed account of the historical context regarding the initial journey of political participation of females in the period of the freedom movement. It mainly focuses on and highlights women's political role and the problems women faced during the Zia regime, including different gender-based laws and Hooded Ordinances (Mumtaz &Shaheed, 1987).

Mehboob Hussain's *The Parliament of Pakistan: A History of Institution-Building and Un-Democratic Practices, 1971-77* is a notable writing that provides an extensive account of information regarding the origin of Parliament in the world. This is valuable literature for a clear understanding of Parliament, its functions, and the foundations of Parliament in the subcontinent. It describes the history of the Parliament in Pakistan. Most specifically, this book focuses on the workings of Parliament during the years of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto 1971-77(Hussain, 2019).

A report by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation on *Women Legislators' Political Participation in Pakistan (2018- 2020)* is a valuable source of information that delves into the role of women legislators during the first two Parliamentary years of the Imran Khan Government. This report

mainly focuses on representing women's performance and legislation during the first and second Parliamentary years. It helps us to understand how a women legislator represents and performs on behalf of the people for raising their concerns in Parliament (FNF, 2020).

*Women in Parliament in Pakistan: Problems and Potential*, Saira Bano. This article underscores the importance of women's presence in Pakistan's political landscape. It also highlights women's problems and challenges in political scenarios due to numerous socio-cultural and political factors. It helps the author examine the obstacles to women's representation in the political scene of South Asia. It also analyses the key possible means to overcome the hurdles faced by women in politics based on gender (Bano, 2009).

This article, Azeema Begum's "*Political Participation of Females in Pakistan: Prospect and Challenges*," highlights women's political participation in conducting public affairs. This research provides an in-depth account of information regarding different problems and challenges in the way women participate in politics. It also delves into the significance of various strategies to empower women with the right to raise their voices and equal representation. It also sheds light on the significance of women's participation in various dynamics, including administrative and legislature (Begum, 2023).

"*Substantive Representation of Women in Asian Parliament*" by Devin K. Joshi and Christian Echle (ed.) is a source that provides detailed literature on the Asian Parliaments with an in-depth study of the Parliaments of the ten countries in Asia. The book comprises four parts, the first of which deals with the different regions of Asia. Part one is on East Asia with the case studies of Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. The second part deals with the cases from Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Filipino, and Timor-Leste. Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh from South Asia are discussed in the third part. This study finds how different institutions like political parties, Parliamentary committee structures, and gender quotas help to reduce the gender gap in Parliaments. The author discusses the Asian context and the factors that can obstruct and increase the representation of women in Asian countries (Joshi, 2023).

*The Gender Face of Asian Politics*, Aazar Ayaz and Andrea Fleschenberg (ed.). This book deals with women's politics in South Asia. It focuses on the multiple dynamics of women in politics, including their participation, representation, women legislators, and the impact of their legislative measures on public policy. This source also discussed the share of women, especially in Pakistani politics. It also provides detailed information on the personal experiences of women and their engagement in Pakistani politics (Ayaz & Fleschenberg, 2009).

*Women in Governing Institutions in South Asia*, edited by Nizam Ahmad, is a compilation of articles on women in Parliament, civil services, and local government. The first part of Parliament has six articles on women in the Parliament of India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (Ahmed, 2018).

Most of the literature consulted in this research concerns the historical background and understanding of Parliament. This literature provides an understanding of Parliament's workings, rights, participation, and women's representation in Parliament. The role of women varies in each assembly and is a changing phenomenon in each assembly. A case study of the 15th National Assembly is a unique work because no previous research and literature are available specific to the topic. This provides a novel perspective in the context of the role of women Parliamentarians in the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Research**

- To understand the evolution of women in the Parliamentary politics of Pakistan.
- To analyze and assess the women's role as Parliamentarians in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan (2018-2023).
- To analyze the bills, objectives, nature, and scope presented by female members of the National Assembly of Pakistan.
- To examine challenges faced by the women Parliamentarians during the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly and the recommendations to cope with such challenges.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

1. How, historically, have women evolved in the Parliamentary politics of Pakistan, and why is women's empowerment necessary?
2. Have women Parliamentarians effectively participated in legislative politics during the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan?
3. What kind of bills were moved by women Parliamentarians, and what were the objectives, nature, and scope of such bills?
4. Had women Parliamentarians faced any challenges while working in legislation? If so, what was the nature of the challenges? Whether they continued to face traditionalist onslaught or not?

## **1.4 Research Methodology**

This study is based upon exploring and understanding the facts and analyzing the contribution of female legislators in the lower house of the Parliament of Pakistan with the case study of

the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly (2018-2023). The researcher consulted both primary and secondary data. Primary data includes National Assembly debates, reports of different organizations, including PIPS, PILDAT, and WPC, interviews with the women Parliamentarian, and print, electronic, and social media. Secondary data includes books, research, and journal articles. This research is a qualitative study because it includes the content analysis of books, articles, reports, interviews, etc. This research is divided into four major chapters. The first chapter provides the details of the women's role in the previous assemblies of Pakistan. Their representation and their debate topics and bills. For this chapter, scholarly books and peer-reviewed articles have been consulted. The second chapter examines the role of women in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly. Who were the women who majorly participated in legislation and debates? What topics were discussed by the female Parliamentarians in government and opposition benches in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly? These questions are attempted to be answered in this chapter. The third chapter analyses the legislative bills initiated by the women Parliamentarians in the assembly and examines the nature and scope of these bills. How have these bills impacted the country? National Assembly debates, bills, and reports were analyzed for these two chapters. The fourth chapter will try to figure out the challenges and the factors that create trouble for women Parliamentarians and how they can cope with these problems. Interviews and talk shows with female Parliamentarians are significant information sources that helped determine the factors and challenges.

### **1.5 Limitations of the Study**

A part of the study is based on interviews with female Parliamentarians. However, the researcher could not conduct more than one interview due to the lack of references and resources. The researcher also prepared a short questionnaire survey similar to the interview questions but did not get a single respondent. So, the study is completed with the help of existing research studies and interviews available on YouTube.

### **1.6 Expected Outcomes**

This study is expected to provide an understanding of the role of women in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly. It is also expected to highlight the contributions and influence of women in the legislative business of the National Assembly and the areas they work for. Additionally, the theoretical analysis is expected to reveal that women play a significant role in all assembly businesses, especially women's empowerment. The researcher expected to navigate the social and internal challenges hindering female representatives from playing effective roles. By analyzing their performance and challenges, it will recommend enhancing the role of women.

### **EVOLUTION OF THE PARLIAMENT AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The word Parliament is derived from the French word Parler, which means “To Talk or to Discuss.” Perhaps La Chanson de Ronald is an early French *epic* of the 11th century that used the word Parliament as the meaning of conversation. Historically, in Italy, this word was used for the general meeting of citizens. Later in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the word was used for court meetings or meetings with the kings. The Italian term "*Parlamento*" had a similar definition to the current one in the thirteenth century when it referred to a fully functional assembly in the cities of Italy (Richardson,1928).

Various sources discuss the scope of Parliament, which is to confer or discuss public issues, such as judicial institutions, and make laws. Currently, Parliament has the power to create, amend, or repeal any law. Legislation and representing the people are the primary functions of Parliament. The word Parliament thus means to discuss, deliberate, or talk, and the concept of Parliament denotes a place or an assembly where people assemble to deliberate and discuss officially.

If Parliament is interpreted according to contemporary times, in that case, it refers to the collective body of people whom the people elect to be the supreme governing legislative body in the country. To put it precisely, Parliament is the name of a body charged with making a country's laws. Historically, in Parliamentary politics all over the world, women remained underrepresented. However, during the last hundred years, the representation of women in politics for legislative measures has increased worldwide. The researcher discusses the Parliament's nature, meaning, origin, and development in this chapter. It highlights the role and representation of females in the legislative process at the international and national levels. This chapter seeks to shed light on the workings of Parliament and the contribution of women legislatures in the Parliament of Pakistan.

#### **2.2 Origin and Development of the Parliament**

The contemporary Parliamentary system has its basis in the British system, which has its roots centuries ago and gradually evolved over a lengthy period. The Parliamentary history can be divided into four main periods, including the period of medieval Parliaments, the periods of Tudors and Stuarts conflicts between the King and the Parliament, the period after the glorious

revolution to the Reform Act, and the final period of the current Parliamentary period started from the Reform Act of 1832 of British Parliament (Ilbert, 1911).

Parliament's origin can be dated back to the medieval Saxon times. During this period, meetings of wise men—the Witenagemot— were held with the King. The King consulted with those wise men on matters of policymaking, justice, and administrative affairs. Witenagemot included the bishops, nobles, and other influential figures who advised the King in decision-making. The 13<sup>th</sup> century was the formative phase in Parliamentary history (Jones, 2009). Magna Carta is one of the most significant milestones in the development of Parliament. In 1215, under the Magna Carta, the barons forced the King to be subject to law. During this phase of Parliamentary development, the King had to consult with the council members in decision-making, significantly in matters of excessive taxation (Skottowe, 1887). At this time, the word Parliament was used for the meetings of the King's Council. In 1258, three sessions of the Parliament were decided to be held at specific times in one year (Jones, 2009).

The end of the thirteenth century witnessed a significant improvement in the history of Parliament. The Model Parliament of 1295, assembled by Edward I, is widely reflected as the first true Parliament in the sense that it comprised not only nobles and clergy but also representatives of the commons – knights, burgesses, and citizens from various towns. This extensive representation marked a significant step towards a more inclusive and structured Parliamentary system. By the mid-14th century, the English Parliament had developed into a bicameral institution containing two separate houses: the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The House of Lords comprised nobles and high-ranking clergy, while the House of Commons included knights. This division reflected medieval England's social and political hierarchies and endorsed a more systematized and efficient legislative process. (Skottowe, 1887).

The Tudor period (1485-1603) saw further amalgamation of Parliamentary power, although within the context of a strong and frequently authoritative monarchy. The reign of Henry VIII was marked by the rise of Parliamentary activity, including the Acts of Supremacy, which established the Church of England and declared the King's supremacy over religious matters. These acts validated Parliament's growing legislative role, even as the monarchy maintained significant control over its proceedings (Pollard, 1926).

The glorious revolution of 1688 was another landmark in the history of Parliament. James II's overthrow defined the end of absolute monarchy and the start of a constitutional monarchy that firmly founded Parliamentary sovereignty. This bloodless revolution resulted from widespread dissatisfaction with James II's attempts to centralize power and enforce Catholicism.

In the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution, the English Parliament passed the Bill of Rights in 1689. This landmark document enshrined several key principles that remain fundamental to Parliamentary democracy today, including the necessity for regular Parliaments, free elections, and freedom of speech within Parliamentary proceedings. The Bill of Rights also established checks on the monarch's power; it ensured that without the consent of Parliament, the King or queen could not suspend laws or levy taxes. These provisions laid the foundation for the modern constitutional monarchy and Parliamentary system (House of Commons, 2010).

Britain's Parliamentary system experienced substantial changes and advancements in the 18th and 19th centuries. The continuing extension of the franchise, mainly through the Constitutional Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884, prolonged the electorate and made the House of Commons more representative of the wider population. These reforms were determined by various social and political movements endorsing greater democratic participation and were often conveyed by intense public debate and protest. The Victorian era saw the rise of modern political parties, which transformed the functioning of the Parliamentary system. The Conservative and Liberal parties emerged as the two dominant political parties. Each represents different segments of society and competes for control of the government. The development of a party system brought more excellent organization and discipline to Parliamentary proceedings and facilitated the formation of stable governments that were capable of enacting comprehensive policies.

The 20th century saw the spread of Parliamentary systems beyond Europe, which were influenced by the British model and adapted to various national contexts. Countries such as Canada, Australia, India, and South Africa adopted Parliamentary systems as part of their constitutional frameworks. These systems amalgamated local traditions and preferences, resulting in a varied range of Parliamentary practices around the world. Throughout the 20th century, Parliaments in many countries continued to evolve, often growing their powers and enhancing their roles in governance. For example, in Britain, the Parliamentary Acts of 1911 and 1949 significantly concentrated the legislative power of the House of Lords, thereby strengthening the supremacy of the elected House of Commons. Similarly, other Parliamentary systems saw reforms intended to increase transparency, accountability, participation, and public representation in the legislative process (Hussain, 2019).

### **2.3 Representation of Women in the Parliament: A Global View**

Globally, the representation of women in the Parliaments indicates that the world is accepting gender equality in every sphere of society. In the world population, the women's ratio is around half. As per population ratio, women must have equal opportunities to men in their participation

in decision-making (Paxton & Huges, 2014). There is a question of why women should be a part of legislation or decision-making. Women's legislatures focus on the issues regarding justice, equality, and human rights, which provide more viable solutions to society through their perspectives and experiences (Ballington & Karam, 2005). Representation of women in the institution of Parliament has enhanced in the past one hundred years. In the 1890s, women did not even have the right to vote. Almost 95% of countries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century granted women the right to vote and stand for elections as their fundamental democratic rights. The political rights of women are now seen as human rights. New Zealand was the first country to give women the fundamental right to vote in 1893. In 1902, Australia became the second country in the world that granted women their fundamental right to vote. Later, it was followed by several European states (Paxton & Huges, 2014). Finland probably became the first country to allow women the right to elect women for the Parliament. In 1906, Finland gave the complete political rights to women (IPU).

During the past three to four decades, women's representation in Parliament has amplified around the world. From 1995 to 2010, women's seats in Parliament notably increased from 11.3- 22.1%. Within 25 years, women have made progress in their representation, most specifically in the UAE, Andorra, Bolivia, Rwanda, Belgium, Mexico, Argentina, Antigua, and Barbuda (Druciarek, 2020). The average representation of women in the Parliament is almost 25.5 percent in the world (UN News, 2021).

Women's representation in long-standing democracies has increased. The representation of women in politics and their participation in decision-making are regarded as indicators of good governance and the development of democracy at all levels. An increase in women's representation is significant in advancing the role of women in all spheres of society and will lead to a more responsive government. (Tadros, 2014). As per the recent reports of 2023, Rwanda has a more excellent ratio of 61.3 % in the lower house and is among the leading countries in the world ranking for women representation. Cuba stands at the second rank, while Nicaragua has a ratio of 55.7% and 53.9%, respectively. At the regional level, Nordic countries have the highest ratio of women representation (Inter-Parliamentary Politics, 2023).

## **2.4 The Quest for Parliamentary System in British India**

The Parliamentary system in South Asia is the product of British rule in India. After three years of the 1857 war and the establishment of the British Crown's direct authority, the Indian Councils Act of 1861 passed. According to this Act, the Governor-General Council comprised five ordinary/executive members (later became six) and six to twelve additional members for legislation. The Council has the authority to enact, amend, and abolish laws governing India.

(Khan, 2017). Bombay, Madras, Bengal's Legislative Councils, and the Governor General's Legislative Council were established in January 1862 under this Act (Chakravarty,1954). This Act is a benchmark in Indian Parliamentary history in the sense that, for the first time, native Indians were given representation in the legislature (Rashiduzzaman,1964). Until the Council Act of 1892, forty-five members, including big zamindars, merchants, and retired government officials, were nominated by the Viceroy to the Council over thirty years (1862-1892) (Chandra et al., 1989).

In the Indian Councils Act of 1892, the legislative council members increased to sixteen, with six official members and ten non-official members. The Viceroy nominated five non-official members, the Provincial Councils nominated four, and the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce nominated one. These members were not permitted to vote. They were free to discuss the budget and ask questions from executive members, but they could not ask supplementary questions (Rashiduzzama,1964). After this Act, the number of Indian members increased, and secondly, it was the first step towards the representative form of government as they represented their provincial councils.

In the 1909 Act, the Council was enlarged to sixty members, including those nominated and elected, and twenty-three official members. The Council can move the resolution and ask the supplementary question. For the first time, Indians were admitted to the executive committee. With this Act, the system of a separate electorate was introduced. The Act of 1919 established a bicameral legislature in place of the Legislative Council, which proved to be a turning point in the evolution of Parliamentary institutions in British India (Hussain,2019). A bicameral legislature had one house known as the Council of State and one known as the Central Legislative Assembly. The Central Legislative Assembly had a three-year term limit, while the Council of State had a five-year tenure. Both houses had direct elections (Khan,2017).

The evolution of Parliamentary governance in British India reached its final form in the Government of India Act of 1935, which later became the Interim Constitution of Pakistan after a few changes (Hussain,2019). The federal legislature comprised two chambers; the House of Assembly and the Council of State. The Governor General represented the Crown in this capacity. There were 156 representatives from British India and upto 104 representatives from Indian states in the Council of State. In the House of Assembly, there were up to 125 representatives from Indian states and 250 representatives from British India. The Council of State was a permanent body, but one-third of its members retired every third year. On the other hand, the House of Assembly had a five-year term (Khan,2017).

## **2.5 Women in the Parliament of British India**

Indian women were never included in the Indian legislative councils, and they never protested for this. During the colonial period, women started their campaigns for political rights under the leadership of Mrs. Sarojni Naidu. A group of fourteen women, led by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and including one Muslim woman, Begum Moulana Hasrat Mohani, met with Montagu to ask for official recognition of women's right to vote. The Congress and All India Muslim League supported their demands. However, in the 1919 Act, these demands were not heard practically (Nawaz,2014). In the 1920s, the women's suffrage movement rose in different regions of India, including Madras, Bombay, the United Provinces, Punjab, and Bengal. In 1927, a small number of women got the right to vote based on property and education. (Khera,1942). The total number of female electorates in six provinces was only six percent of the total adult franchise. Jaiswal claims that Muthulakshmi Reddy was the first to be appointed to the Madras Legislative Council as a legislator in 1927 (Jaiswal,2018).

However, women's participation can be witnessed in the negotiations that led to the Act of 1935. The Indian delegation to the roundtable conferences included two women. One was Begum Jahan Ara Shahnawaz, and the other was Mrs. Radhabai Subharoyan, who attended those conferences. Subsequently, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu also joined them. The issues of women's political rights were also discussed at the conferences. They presented a memorandum that majorly demanded that voting rights be granted without any special qualifications. Besides this, some women's organizations, including the Council of Women, All India Women Conference, and India's Women's Association, worked for political rights. Fortunately, in the Government of India Act of 1935, women's demands were heard, and quotas were introduced for women and minorities. Six seats, which was around four percent in the Council of State and nine seats in the Central Legislative Assembly, were reserved for women (Khan,2017). In the elections of 1936 and 1946, provincial legislators were held under this Act, and women were elected. Some women were as follows: Hasina Murshid, Farhat Bano, Jahan Ara Shahnawaz, Begum Hasan Ara, Amjadi Bano, and Begum Salma Tassaduq Hussain. Begum Rashida Latif, Tayabaji Faizi. In the Central Legislative Assembly in 1945, there were no Muslim women elected, but in 1946, when the Indian Constituent Assembly was formed, three Muslim women, including Jahanara Shahnawaz (Punjab), Begum Aiziz Rasool (UP), and Begum Shaista Ikramullah were included (Bengal)(Afzal,1999).

## **2.6 Parliamentary Politics of Pakistan: The Representation of Women**

In Pakistan, women have been represented in Parliament since independence. The primary reason for that is the gender quota, which increased gradually. In 2002, the reserve seats

increased to thirty-three percent. The participation of women in the National Assembly of Pakistan is discussed below briefly in different phases.

### **2.6.1 Women Parliamentarians (1949-1958)**

Pakistan adopted the Government of India Act, 1935, after several amendments as the Provisional Constitution of Pakistan till the making of the 1956 Constitution. Under this Act, women have the gender quota, and this policy was continued by Pakistan. The first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan (CAD) was formed to make a constitution and for legislation purposes. The first Constituent Assembly comprised sixty-nine members and was later raised to seventy-four to give representation to princely states (Khan, 2017). Two women were in the first assembly- Begum Shaeesta Ikramullah and Begum Jahan Ara Shahnawaz. As mentioned, these two women have political family backgrounds and play their part in pre-partition politics. These women actively participated as Parliamentarians.

Begum Shaista was majorly concerned with refugees and education. She was also a member of different societies and semi-governmental organizations. In 1948, she represented Pakistan in the different delegates at the International Conferences and the United Nations in Paris, and in 1951, she was invited by the United States (Ikramullah,1963). These two women were part of a sub-committee of the Basic Principles Committee. Women also participate in assembly debates and discuss finance, foreign policy, democracy, and women's issues. Begum Jahan Ara refused to go to Moscow because she was working on women's rights in the new constitution and wanted to pass the women's rights charter by the National Assembly (Shahnawaz, 1971). She was a member of the fundamental rights committee. In her speeches at the National Assembly, she spoke about the fundamental rights and women's rights/gender equality in the constitution. She ensured that rights would be given in the constitution. (CAD, 21 September 1954). Both were members of different committees. Begum Shahnawaz served on the standing committee of the Ministry of Finance, Foreign Affairs, Health, and Commerce. Begum Shaista was a member of the Ministry of Education and Commerce's standing committees and the Ministry of Refugees, Interior, Information, and Broadcasting advisory committees.

After the dissolution of the first CAP in October 1954, the second CAP (1955-1958) was established with eighty members. Unfortunately, there was no female member in this CAP. In 1956, Pakistan adopted the first Constitution. In the Constitution of 1956, women had ten reserved seats for ten years. However, in October 1958, this democratic process in Pakistan faced a setback in the form of the first martial law by the then commander-in-chief of the army, General Ayub Khan.

## **2.6.2 Women Parliamentarians (1962-1969)**

After declaring martial law, Ayub Khan formulated a new constitution in 1962, and six seats, three from each wing, were reserved for women in the constitution. The elections were held in 1962 for national and provincial assemblies according to the 1962 Constitution. Basic democrats were also the electorates for the assemblies. Consequently, in the National Assembly (1962-1965), there were eight women representatives- six on reserved seats named Begum Shamun Nahar Mahmood, Begum Roquyya Anwar, Begum Sirajuneesa Chaudary, Begum Mujeebun-Nisa Mohammad Akram, Begum Khudeja Khan and Begum Zari Sarfraz- two were elected on general constituencies from their respective electoral colleges named as Begum Hamida Mohammad Ali from Bogra, East Pakistan and Miss Zahara Aziz from Layallpur, West Pakistan.

The following polls were conducted in 1965. In the next National Assembly elections, only six women on reserved seats were part of the Parliament: Mrs. Mariam Hashimuddin Ahmad, Begum Razia Faiz, Begum Dolly Azad, Begum Zari Sarfaraz, Begum Khadija G. A. Khan, and Begum Mujeebun Nisa Muhammad Akram.

Women in this phase also play their part in the National Assembly debates, including the issues of women's political rights, education, budget, foreign policy, and other social issues. Begum Zari Sarfraz expressed during the budget discussion that their foreign policy had not yielded any significant gains in the last fifteen years. For the sake of their nation, they must develop a new foreign policy (NAD, 21 June 1962). Begum Khadija Khan suggested that foreign policy should be flexible to absorb the new changes. (NAD, 05 June 1965). Women not only speak about their rights and issues, but they also criticize the government's fascist policies as the opposition. Begum Roquyya expressed that the press only gives coverage to the government, and radio broadcasts neglect the opposition's viewpoints. During a budget debate in 1964, Begum Sirajuneesa criticized the presidential system and said that the National Assembly did not influence the decision-making process under this system (NAD, 19 June 1964).

If we take an example of women working on women's rights is that Begum Roquyya Anwer presented an amendment bill in 1964 that women should have twenty-five percent reserved seats in the National Assembly. Women were also made up the committee members during this time. Begum G.A. Khan was on the select committee to make and amend laws regarding merchant shipping in 1969 and the Franchise Commission special committee in 1963. Begum Zari Sarfraz was chosen to the standing committee on economic coordination and planning in 1968 (Afzal, 1999).

### **2.6.3 Women Parliamentarians (1970-1977)**

After the first General Elections in 1970 during General Yahya Khan's reign, Pakistan faced a tragedy in the form of separating its east wing. However, in the 1970 elections, seats reserved for women were thirteen, seven from East and six from West Pakistan. The fifth National Assembly (1972-1977) was formed with the members elected from the west wing in the election. Women in the Fifth National Assembly were the only six against the reserved seats. These women were Shireen Wahab Sahiba, Begum Nasim Jahan, Begum Zahida Sultana, Jennifer Jehanzeba Qazi Musa, Nargis Naim Sandhu, and Dr. Mrs. Ashraf Abbasi. In addition to those mentioned above, following the demise of Mr. R. M. Andrews, a sitting member of the Assembly, his wife, Mrs. Najma Andrews, in a by-election, became a member of the House in 1976 as a minority member.

In this Assembly, Nargis Naim Sandhu and Dr. Mrs. Ashraf Abbasi served as Parliamentary Secretary and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, respectively. In 1972, three women, Nasim Jahan, Mrs. Jennifer Qazi, and Begum Ashraf Abbasi, were appointed to the five constitution committee members. The issue of the women's right to hold the office and the reservation of seats remained under discussion in that committee. An amendment from the member of Jamiat Ulama Islam was proposed that only Muslim males should be eligible for the president, which Dr. Ashraf Abbasi opposed. After that, the amendment was rejected. In March 1973, a new constitution was implemented, and in this constitution, 25(2) mentioned that there would be no discrimination on the basis of gender. Ten seats were reserved for women. Following Pakistan's official delegation's attendance at the First World Conference of Women in Mexico in 1975, another significant step was the establishment of the First Pakistan Women's Rights Committee (Muhammad, Abbas & Waris, 2022).

Moreover, female MNAs actively engaged in several committees. Dr. Mrs. Ashraf Abbasi served on the Standing Committee on Finance; Mrs. Jennifer Qazi Musa served on the Standing Committee on Education and Provincial Coordination, while Begum Zahida Sultana served on the Standing Committee of Cabinet, Establishment and National Affairs, and Overseas Pakistani Committee. Begum Nasim Jahan served on the Standing Committee on Planning and Development, Economic Coordination, and External Assistance; Begum Shireen Wahab served on the Standing Committee on Labour and Local Bodies, Health and Social Welfare, and Family Planning; and Mrs. Nargis Naeem Sandhu served on the Standing Committee on Production, Presidential Affairs, and Commerce. Besides this, women debate on different subjects, including political, constitutional, and economic issues and women's rights.

In 1977, the General Elections were held under the Constitution of 1973, and as a result, the Sixth National Assembly was formed. For the first time in Pakistan, a woman secured a general seat in a General Election. Begum Naseem Wali Khan was directly elected from two constituencies of Peshawar and Mardan, NWFP, on the ticket of the Pakistan National Alliance. However, she never took oath because her party rejected the results and started protests. Ten women nominated for reserved seats were as follows: Begum Kulsoom Saifullah, Begum Nafisa Khalid, Miss Mubarak Begum, Mrs. Nargis Naeem, Begum Bilqis Habibullah, Mrs. Dilshad Begum, Mrs. Samia Usman, Mrs. Nasima Sultana Akhmut, Begum Nusrat Bhutto, and Mrs. Bilqis Begum.

The female members of the National Assembly who were elected in 1977 held positions on several committees. For example, Begum Kulsoom Saifullah was selected to serve on the Finance Committee (NAD, 04 May 1977). She was also assigned to the three committees formed to amend the Federal Public Service Commission Act of 1973, the Child Servant Act of 1973, and the 1973 Constitution (NAD, 27 June 1977). Likewise, Mrs. Naseema Akhmut and Mrs. Shavak Rustam were members of the Pakistan Nursing Council Committee (NAD, 10 June 1977).

During this brief Assembly, women addressed various issues and shared their perspectives on different bills and matters during their speeches in the National Assembly. For instance, in the discussion concerning the price control and prevention of profiteering and hoarding bills, figures such as Begum Nafisa, Mrs Sultana, and Begum Dilshad voiced their support for price control and fixed pricing (NAD, 13 May 1977).

#### **2.6.4 Women Parliamentarians during 1985-88**

General Zia-ul-Haq abolished the assemblies on July 5, 1977, and established Pakistan's third martial law. After taking power, Zia promised to hold elections within ninety days. However, he did not fulfill this promise, and on February 2, 1979, he declared that the elections would be further postponed. In 1985, non-party base elections were scheduled, all political activities were banned, and reserved seats for women increased to twenty. Out of the candidates vying for the National Assembly, only one woman, Syeda Abida Hussain from Jhang, managed to secure a National Assembly seat. However, through subsequent by-elections in Bahawalnagar, another candidate, Nasim Majid, was able to secure a seat in the National Assembly. Twenty women were nominated for reserved seats, and one woman was nominated for the minority seat. The nominated women were as follows: Sahibzadi Mehmooda Begum, Begum Afsar Riza Qizilbash, Mrs. Nisar Fatima Zahra, Begum Silvat Sher Ali Khan Pataudi, Begum Sarwari Sadiq, Mrs. Ishrat Ashraf, Mrs. Khurshid Begum, Mrs. Rehana Aleem Mashhadi, Mrs. Attiya

Inayatullah, Mrs. Dureshahwar Mazari, Mrs. Rafia Tariq, Mrs. Farrukh Mukhtar, Mrs. Afroze Nazir Ahmed, Begum Salma Ahmed, Mrs. Rashida Pasha Khuhro, Mrs. Qamar-un-Nisa Qamar, Begum Kulsoom Saifullah Khan, Mrs Bilquis Nasr-um-Minallah, Begum Bilquees Shahbaz, Dr Miss. Noor Jahan Panezai and Mrs Lila Wanti were nominated for the minority seat.

Syeda Abida Hussain Shah made history as the first woman to take oath in the seventh National Assembly after securing a seat alongside male members in the general elections. Female representatives held various positions in the federal government. Begum Kulsoom Saifullah Khan served as Minister of State for Commerce, and Begum Afsar Riza Qizalbash held the Minister of State for Special Education and Social Welfare position. Additionally, three women served as Parliamentary Secretaries: Mrs. Rehana Aleem Mashhadi as Parliamentary Secretary of Information and Broadcasting, Begum Nasim Majid as Parliamentary Secretary of Housing and Works, and Dr. Miss Noor Jehan Panezai as Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Special Education, and Social Welfare.

Between 1985 and 1988, several women served as members of various government standing committees. Mrs Rafia Tariq served on two committees, Begum Qamar-un-Nisa on one, Begum Bilquees Nasr-um-Minallah on another, and Begum Sarwari Sadiq on another. Additionally, women were members of committees such as Finance and Economic Affairs, Food and Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, Health and Social Welfare, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Petroleum and Natural Resources, Production, Water and Power, as well as the Finance Committee (see standing committees 1985-88).

Further, women made speeches, moved bills, and raised points. The first private bill in the assembly was moved by Syeda Abida Hussain, which was an environmental protection bill focused on protecting the Houbara bustard from extinction (Hussain, 2015). After that, she moved several private bills on different issues, including monument protection. In a debate, she raised her voice against the support of Afghan jihad and questioned the logic behind this. (Hussain, 2015) Besides this, other female members debated and moved motions on different issues, for example, foreign policy, the dismissal of two hundred employees of railway wastage of food, etc (Nawaz,2014).

### **2.6.5 Women Parliamentarians during 1988-1999**

Zia's sudden death in August 1988 marked the end of martial rule, and the political parties filed a petition against the non-party base election. The court declared the non-party base election null and void. The next election was conducted in November 1988 on a party base. Four

women, including Dr. Nusrat Bhutto, Dr. Mrs. Ashraf Abbasi, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, and Syeda Abida Hussain, were elected to the general seats. Twenty women nominated for reserved seats were; Begum Kalsoom Saifullah, Mrs. Malik Mehr-un-Nisa, and Mrs. Shamim N.D. Khan, Mrs. Rukaya Khanum Soomro, Dr. Mrs. Mehmooda Shah, Mrs. Zareen Majeed, Begum Nasreen Rao Rashid, Mrs. Attiya Inayatullah, Mrs. Amira Ehsan, Mrs. Shanaz Wazir Ali, Mrs. Rehana Aleem Mashadi, Mrs. Abida Malik, Mrs. Razia Sultana, Mrs. Amna Piracha, Begum Rehana Sarwar, Begum Sarwari Sadiq, Bibi Amna, Begum Bilqees Shahbaz, Dr. Miss Noor Jehan Panezai, Mrs. Samina Razak.

Benazir Bhutto made history by becoming the first woman to serve as a prime minister in the Muslim world. Additionally, Dr Ashraf Abbasi served as the deputy speaker of the National Assembly, and Miss Noor Jehan Panezai took on the role of Parliamentary Secretary of Health, Special Education, and Social Welfare. Moreover, the Federal Cabinet included five women as Ministers: Begum Nusrat Bhutto as Senior Minister without portfolio, Begum Rehana Sarwar as the Federal Minister for Women Development, Begum Shahnaz Wazir Ali as the Minister of State for Education, Begum Mehmooda Shah as the Minister of State for Social Welfare, and Begum Nadir Khakwani as the Minister of State for Population Welfare.

In 1990, the president dissolved the Assembly under 58 2(b), and new polls were conducted. Women's representation declined by one percent. Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto were the only two women in the assembly elected to the general seats. There were no special seats for women in the 1990 and 1993 elections because the 1973 Constitution's Article 51(4) lays forth the terms of the reserve seats for women in the National Assembly. This clause states that it will remain in force for ten years or until three general elections have been held, whichever comes first (Bari, F., & Pal, M. S. 2000). Due to the three general elections that took place in 1977, 1985, and 1988, the women's reserve seat provision expired.

In 1993, the president again dissolved the assembly. Four women candidates, Ms. Tahmina Daultana, Begum Nusrat Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, and Mrs. Shahnaz Javed, secured seats in the National Assembly in the subsequent elections. As a result, Benazir Bhutto regained the position of prime minister.

In the 1996 election, six women were elected to the National Assembly: Begum Majida Wayne, Begum Nusrat Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, Ms. Tahmina Daultana, and Dr. Fahmida Mirza. In this assembly, women elected for general seats have a higher ratio but still have a low percentage because of the absence of reserve seats.

### **2.6.6 Women Parliamentarians during 2002-2007**

The twenty-first century marked a considerable increase in the number of women in Parliament. Pervaiz Musharraf took control of the country in 1999 by imposing martial law. During his rule, females were given representation in all tiers of government. The quota seats for women increased to sixty in the National Assembly. In the 2002 elections, thirteen female candidates successfully won general seats. Women's names are Ms. Sumaira Malik, Ms. Saima Akhtar Bharwaan, Ms Riffat Javed Kahlon, Ms. Rubina Shaheen Watto, Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar, Mrs. Khalida Mohsin Ali, Ms. Samina Khalid Ghurki, Mrs Shamshad Sattar Bachani, Ms. Zobaida Jalal, Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, Dr Fahmida Mirza and Ms. Eman Wasim (resign in 2004).

Sixty women entered the National Assembly through reserved seats. Some of the names are Dr. Firdaus Aashiq Awam, Begum Tahmina Dasti, Ms. Tehmina Daultana, Ms. Sherry Rahman, Ms. Shagufta Jumani, Ms. Fauzia Wahab, and Ms. Rukaya Khanum Soomro.

In 2002, Ms. Zubaida Jalal was the only woman minister in the twenty-one-member federal cabinet who was given the ministry of education. Later, during Mr. Shaukat Aziz's tenure, the federal cabinet expanded to fifty-nine members, including six women. Despite this, most women were appointed as junior ministers. The office of the Minister of Women's Development was separated from Ms. Zubaida Jalal's prior portfolio, and she was appointed as the Minister of Social Welfare and Special Education. The women ministers in the federal cabinet were Ms. Zubaida Jalal, Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar, Ms. Ghulam Bibi Bharwana, Begum Shahnaz Shaikh, Ms. Anisa Zeb Tahirkheli, and Ms. Sumera Malik. Additionally, three advisors to the Prime Minister were appointed, one of whom was a woman, Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar. In 2007, Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar was removed from her post, and Ms. Sumera Malik became the Federal Minister for Women's Development. During its five-year tenure, there were six women Parliamentary secretaries out of 33 (18.1%) and nine women chairpersons of standing committees out of a total of 37 in the NA (24.3%) (Mirza& Wagha,2009).

Over the past five years, the legislative record demonstrates that women have significantly contributed to addressing issues such as violence, health, education, environment, and governance through various legislative procedures. They have actively engaged in learning and applying rules, participating in discussions, asking questions, introducing motions, raising points of order, and issuing calling attention notices. Their confidence has grown rapidly, and they have shown their ability to draft bills or facilitate their drafting. Over five years, women have been responsible for moving 27 percent of the total questions, 30 percent of the total calling attention notices, 24 percent of the total resolutions, and 42 percent of the total private

members' bills in the House. This exceptional contribution exceeds their representation percentage in the Assembly (Mirza & Wagha,2009).

### **2.6.7 Women Parliamentarians during 2008-2018**

On February 18, 2008, general elections for the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly were conducted. Following restoration and an increase in the number of seats reserved, these were the second elections. Sixty women, or 22.2 percent of the legislature, were nominated to reserved seats, and sixteen won general seats. Women elected on reserved seats for women were Ms. Sumaira Malik, Ms. Ghulam Bibi Bharwana, Ms. Saima Akhtar Bharwana, Ms. Raheela Baluch, Ms. Farkhanda Amjad, Ms. Saira Afzal Tarar, Dr. Firdaus Ashiq Awan, Begum Tehmina Daultana, Ms.Hina Rabbani Khar, Ms. Faryal Talpur, Dr. Fahmida Mirza, Mrs. Shamshad Sattar Bachani, Ms. Khushbakht Shujaat, Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, Ms. Samina Khalid Ghurki, Ms. Sumaira Yasir Rasheed. Sixty women in reserved seats are Ms. Tahira Aurangzeb, Ms. Shery Rehman, Ms. Kashmala Tariq, Ms. Shahnaz Wazir Ali, and Ms. Marvi Memom.

Dr. Fehmida Mirza became the first female Speaker of the House with a substantial two-thirds majority. During the five years, 161 male lawmakers asked 7,918 questions, compared to 8,138 questions by 55 women legislators. Since they submitted over 48% of the questions, female lawmakers chosen for reserved seats performed their oversight function. Fifteen of the bills passed by private members were introduced by female Parliamentarians, all of whom were elected to reserved seats (FAFEN,2014b). The primary subjects of these bills included domestic abuse against women, including acid-throwing incidents, government services, education, election rules, the elimination of discretionary quotas in public housing programs, and the outlawing of anti-women activities.

Another achievement of the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan was the establishment of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC). The WPC seeks to increase women's role in the Parliament and provides a platform for female legislators to work on women's development and empowerment. An elected secretary and a council from both opposition and government benches run the affairs of the WPC.

The 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly election occurred in 2013 after the thirteenth National Assembly's tenure was completed. The National Assembly comprises seventy women members, with nine elected on general seats, sixty on reserved seats for women, and one on a reserved seat for non-Muslims.

Women in the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly served the office as ministers; Maryam Aurangzeb as Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage, Mrs. Saira Afzal Tarar as National Health

Services, Regulations and Coordination, Ms. Leila Khan as Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, and Mrs. Anusha Rahman Ahmad Khan as Information Technology and Telecommunication.

During the first Parliamentary year, female lawmakers actively participated in the lawmaking process by introducing a total of twelve private member bills, with six bills being presented individually and six bills in collaboration with their fellow colleagues. These bills primarily addressed issues related to human rights, democracy, governance, and political development. Furthermore, female Parliamentarians submitted twenty resolutions, fourteen calling attention notices, 1,383 questions, and twenty-two motions under rule 259 individually. Additionally, they raised 64 points of order during the reporting period (FAFEN,2014a). In the last year, female lawmakers individually introduced 44 bills (26%) and collaborated with their male counterparts to advance an additional 27 bills (16%). Women sponsored 31 bills individually and worked with men to advance 22 bills in the National Assembly (FAFEN, 2018a).

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The share of women in the Parliament of Pakistan largely depends on the quota system. During the period when women did not have quota representation, their participation dropped to just one to three percent in the 1990s. However, female members who were privileged to reach the National Assembly actively participated in legislative activities, such as moving bills and motions, raising national issues related to the economy, and social, political, and human rights on the forum. This situation improved after the increase in reserved seats in 2002. Since then, women have served in various roles, such as prime minister, speaker, deputy speaker, Parliamentary secretary, and minister.

### THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE 15<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN

#### 3.1. The 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly

The General Elections for the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan were held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2018 under the Elections Act 2017. Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Shahbaz Sharif's<sup>1</sup> Pakistan Muslim League(N) (PLM-N), and Bilawal Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) were the leading competitors. PLM-N won 64 seats, and PPP (Pakistan People's Party-Parliamentarians)<sup>2</sup> Won 43 seats. PTI secured 116 seats in the National Assembly but could not form a simple majority and formed the government through an alliance with several independents and smaller parties, including Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q), Baluchistan Awami Party (BAP), Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA), etc. Consequently, a coalition government was formed, and PTI chairman Imran Khan was elected 22<sup>nd</sup> Prime Minister of Pakistan. The governing party's Asad Qaiser was elected as the speaker of the National Assembly, and Qasim Suri as the Deputy Speaker.

The government faced daring opposition led by Mian Shahbaz Sharif. With the growing circumstances, political instability rises as the opposition considers that the government cannot deal with the issues confronting the country. Eleven opposition parties made a political alliance named the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) in September 2020 under the presidency of Moulana Fazal-ur-Rehman. The primary objective of this alliance was to overthrow the government of PTI (DAWN, 2020). Resultantly, Imran Khan was ousted from the Government through a vote of no confidence on 10 April 2022, marking the first-ever successful vote of no confidence against a Prime Minister in Pakistan's history. The new prime minister, Mian Shahbaz Sharif, was elected on 11 April 2022 in the National Assembly, and then the opposition was led by Raja Riaz Ahmad. The speaker and deputy speaker of the National Assembly resigned from their chair. Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and Zahid Ikram Durrani (MMA) were elected as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker (NAD,2022). Hence, the 15th National Assembly

---

<sup>1</sup> After the disqualification of Mian Nawaz Sharif, his brother Shahbaz Sharif held the office of the president of PLM-N. For more see Riaz, R. (2018, February 27). *Shahbaz Sharif named president of PML-N, brother Nawaz becomes "Leader for Life."* Arab News; Arab News. <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1255591/world>

<sup>2</sup> PPPP is the extension of the PPP formed in 2002 for election purposes. For more see *About Us - Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians*. (2020, November 6). Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians. <https://pppp.org.pk/website/about-us/>

witnessed the formation of two governments: the first PTI government lasted from August 18, 2018- April 10, 2022. The second term, from April 11, 2022-August 09, 2023, was a coalition between the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and the PPP<sup>3</sup>. The 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly completed its five-year term and was dissolved on August 09, 2023.

In legislation, the PTI government was less active than the PDM-PPPP government. In three and half years, the PTI government significantly relied on ordinances rather than acts/bills for legislation. Seventy-five ordinances were produced in the five years, of which the PTI government promulgated 72. Additionally, 126 bills out of 279 bills were passed in PTI's three-year tenure, and 153 were passed in the PDM government (PILDAT, 2023). This reliance on ordinances raises questions about the legislation process. Throughout its 5-year term, the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly was convened for 452 sittings, averaging 90 sittings per year. When comparing the number of sittings, the PTI government convened 308 sittings during its 3 years and 8 months in office, while the coalition government called 144 sittings during its 1 year and 4 months in power (PILDAT, 2023).

### **3.2. Representation of Women in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan**

Section 206 of the Elections Act 2017 states that “every political party should give five percent of party tickets to general seats” (ECP, 2017). The political parties followed the Elections Act and gave five percent of tickets to female politicians, positively impacting women's political representation. As a result, 171 female candidates contested for general seats-112 with party tickets and 64 independents, which is a higher number than the previous election in 2013, in which 135 women contested for the elections(Gul & Sherazi, 2022). Eight females succeeded in reaching the National Assembly on general seats. While two won the by-elections held in 2021 in Lahore NA-133 and Sialkot-75.

The number of women representatives varies from 45 to 70 during the five years of Parliament. However, it is mainly referred to as 69 women members of the National Assembly (MNAs) 60

---

<sup>3</sup> PPPP was initially part of PDM but later stepped down in 2021.

reserved seats<sup>4</sup>, eight in general seats<sup>5</sup>, and one in a minority seat<sup>6</sup>. This comprised 20 percent of the total representation in the House of 342 (FAFEN,2019). PTI MNAs resigned from their seats as a protest after the vote of no-confidence against their leader and then Prime Minister Imran Khan and the Election Commission de-notified nine female MNAs till 20 January, including Shireen Mazari and Zartaj Gul (The News, 2023). Meanwhile, the eighteen female MNAs were de-notified on 25 January 2023 (The Express Tribune,2023).

### 3.3. Profile of Women MNAs

This section briefly discusses the female legislators' political background, experience, qualifications, and professions. Women nominated for reserved seats mainly belong to politically influential parties. Political parties faced criticism over the nomination of names for reserved seats. The 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly also has names from the political background or closely related to the party head. PLM-N MNA Zeb Jaffar is the daughter of former senator and MNA Jaffar Iqbal Gujjar. Jaffar Iqbal's niece, Maiza Hameed, is also the MNA on reserved seats. Former foreign minister Asif Khawaja's wife, Musarrat Asif, and niece, Shaza Fatima, were also given the privilege. PTI MNA Nafeesa Khattak's brother-in-law is Pervaiz Khattak, the former chief minister of KPK. Nausheen Farooq Ibrahim is the daughter-in-law of former Azad Kashmir President of Sardar Ibrahim. Tahira Aurangzeb's daughter Maryam Aurangzeb, Zahra Waddod, and Sahista Pervaiz Malik are a few more examples (Malik & Ghauri, 2018). In 2018, some new faces also got the chance to be the legislator, e.g., Andleeb Abbas, Fauzia Bahram, Wajiha Akram, Asiya Azeem, Zartaj Gul, Kanwal Shauzab, Javaria Zafar Aheer,

---

<sup>4</sup> Women on reserved seats are: Aisha Ghaus Pasha (PLM-N), Aliya Hamza Malik (PTI), Aliya Kamran (MMAP), Andleeb Abbas (PTI), Asma Qadeer/Hadeed (PTI), Aysha Rajab Ali (PLM-N), Begum Tahira Bukhari (PLM-N), Dr. Seemi Bukhari (PTI), Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro (PPPP), Dr. Shireen M. Mazari (PTI), Farukh Khan (PLM-N), Fauzia Behram (PTI), Ghazala Saifi (PTI), Hina Rabbani Khar (PPPP), Javaria Zafar Aheer (PTI), Kanwal Shauzab (PTI), Kiran Imran Dar (PLM-N), Kishwar Zehra (MQMP), Mahreen Razzaq Bhutto (PPPP), Maiza Hameed (PLM-N), Maleeka Ali Bokhari (PTI), Marriyum Aurangzeb (PLM-N), Ms. Asiya Azeem (PTI), Ms. Shakila Luqman (PLM-N), Munawara Bibi Baloch (PTI), Munaza Hassan (PTI), Musarrat Asif Khawaja (PLM-N), Musarrat Rafique Mahesar (PPPP), Nafeesa Inayatullah Khan Khattak (PTI), Nasiba Channa (PPPP), Naureen Farooq Ibrahim (PTI), DR. Nausheen Hamid (PTI), Naz Baloch (PPPP), Nusrat Wahid (PTI), Nuzhat Pathan (PTI), Prof. Dr. Shahnaz Baloch (BNP), Romina Khurshid Alam (PLM-N), Rubina Irfan (BAP), Rubina Jamil (PTI), Rukhsana Naveed (PTI), Saira Bano (GDA), Sajida Begum (PTI), Dr. Samina Matloob (PLM-N), Seema Mohiuddin Jameeli (PLM-N), Shagufta Jumani (PPPP), Shaheen Naz Saifullah (PTI), Dr. Shahida Rehmani (PPPP), Shahida Akhtar Ali (MMAP), Shahnaz Saleem Malik (PLM-N), Shaista Pervaiz (PLM-N), Shamim Ara Panhwar (PPPP), Shandana Gulzar Khan (PTI), Shaza Fatima Khawaja (PLM-N), Sobia Kamal Khan (PTI), Syma Nadeem (PTI), Tahira Aurangzeb (PLM-N), Tashfeen Safdar (PTI), Uzma Riaz (PTI), Wajiha Qamar (PTI), Zahra Waddod Fatemi (PLM-N), Zeb Jaffar (PLM-N), Zille Huma (PTI)

<sup>5</sup> Ghulam Bibi Bharwana (PTI), Zartaj Gul (PTI), Dr Nafisa Shah (PPPP), Shazia Marri (PPPP), Dr. Fahmida Mirza (GDA), Shamsun Nisa (PPPP), Zubaida Jalal (PTI), Mahnaz Akber Aziz (BAP). Women won in Bi-Election are Ms. Shaista Pervaiz Malik (Bi-Election NA-133) (PLM-N) and Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar (PLM-N) (By-Election NA-75)

<sup>6</sup> Sunila Ruth (PTI)

Aliya Hamza Malik, etc. (Bangash, 2018). Some seasoned Parliamentarians were also part of this assembly, including Dr. Fahmida Mirza, Shazia Marri, Hina Rabbani Khar, Dr. Nafisa Shah, and Zubeida Jalal Khan.

The educational qualifications of female legislators are as follows: five women were postgraduates (M.Phil./PhD), four females were law graduates, seven were medical/dental doctors, one was an engineer, twenty-three had master's degrees, and fifteen females held bachelor's degrees. Others have an intermediate education or less than that (FAFEN, 2018b). The female legislators came from different professions. Among them were two agriculturists, eleven businesspersons, one landlord, three female law practitioners, six medical practitioners, four teachers, and four self-employed. Nineteen female legislators are full-time Parliamentarians or politicians, and fifteen women legislators are Housewives (FAFEN, 2018b).

### **3.4. Women in the Federal Cabinet of the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly**

Three female MNAs served as federal ministers in Imran Khan's cabinet. Ms. Zubaida Jalal, an experienced politician and social activist, was the first-ever female minister for defense production. Under her leadership, the Ministry of Defence production took several initiatives. A few notable achievements and initiatives include the establishment of Gwadar Shipyard, 22 Foreign delegations, 10 national delegations, and 28 foreign exhibitions attended by the ministry to promote exports. Besides this, in three years, the ministry formulated a policy regarding export and import procedures (MoDP, 2021). Dr Shireen M. Mazari, a professor, served as the Minister for Human Rights. During her tenure, she led a range of legislation and other initiatives like campaigns to strengthen the human rights framework in Pakistan. Under her leadership, Pakistan made its first five-year plan for business and human rights. This plan aims to safeguard human rights in all business activities (UNDP, 2021). Besides this, during her tenure, the National Assembly legislated human rights issues. Dr Fahmida Mirza, a veteran politician, was the minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination. Additionally, Ms Zartaj Gul, a young Parliamentarian, served as the Minister of State for Climate Change. In Shahbaz Sharif's cabinet, two female MNAs served as federal ministers. Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb was responsible for Information and Broadcasting, and Ms Shazia Marri, a very vocal and experienced Parliamentarian, oversaw Poverty Alleviation and Social Security. Additionally, two female MNAs held the position of Minister of State: Dr. Aisha Ghaus Pasha, an economic expert for Finance and Revenue, and Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar, an experienced Parliamentarian for Foreign Affairs. Furthermore, Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, Ms. Rubina Irfan, and Ms Shaista Pervaiz Malik served as Special Assistants to the Prime Minister.

### **3.5. Standing Committees under the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly and the Role of Women**

Standing committees are established for each ministry to examine the concerned ministry's expenditures, administration, public petitions, and policies. The committees can also send recommendations to the ministry and suggest any legislation. During this assembly, women served as members of the standing committees and took on leadership roles as chairpersons for several committees. The female members of various standing committees in the Parliament played vital roles in shaping legislative decisions.

The women who served as chairpersons of the Standing Committee are as follows:

- Ms. Kishwer Zahra for Cabinet Secretariat
- Ms Nuzhat Pathan for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination
- Ms Mahreen Razzaq Bhutto for Human Rights
- Ms Javeria Zafar Aheer for Information and Broadcasting
- Ms. Shugufta Jumani for National Heritage and Culture Division
- Ms. Saira Bano for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division

Due to the lack of access to official documents and reports from the standing committees, the researcher cannot accurately discuss the role of female Parliamentarians within these committees. However, it can be inferred that women's participation in other National Assembly activities would likely be vocal during the standing committees' meetings as well.

### **3.6. Women as the Parliamentary Secretaries**

The Parliamentary Secretary represents the government and works as a bridge between the ministry concerned and the House. He/she speaks on behalf of the minister in the National Assembly. He/she answers the questions asked by the MNAs to the relevant ministry. The Parliamentary secretary assists the minister in formulating the policies and preparing a speech for the Assembly. In the minister's absence, the Parliamentary secretary speaks on bills (PIPS,2024).

Women lawmakers got the opportunity to showcase their abilities and represented different ministries for five years. The study of National Assembly debates clearly shows the active role of women as Parliamentary secretaries while answering questions and engaging in other National Assembly Business.

Ghazala Saifi was the Parliamentary secretary for National History and Heritage. Maleeka Bukhari gave her services as the Parliamentary Secretary of Law and Justice. Maryam Aurangzeb is responsible for Information, Broadcasting, and National Heritage. Nausheen

Hamid was the Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation, and Coordination. Rubina Jamil served as secretary for Defense Production, and Rukhsana Naveed for Climate Change. Wajiha Qamar provided services to the Federal Education and Personal Training and Syma Nadeem for the Inter-Provincial Coordination. Sobia Kamal Khan, Mahnaz Akber Aziz, Shahida Akhtar Ali, Shahida Rahmani, Zeb Jaffar, and Naz Baloch also served as the Parliamentary Secretaries (NAD,2018-23).

### **3.7. Women on the Panel of Chairpersons**

At the commencement of every session of the National Assembly, the Speaker nominates not more than six members from the MNAs called the panel of chairpersons. If the speaker and deputy speaker are absent in any sitting, one of the panel members presides at the sitting and has the same powers as the speaker.

Female MNAs served on the panel of chairpersons and presided over the sitting. In the fourth session, there were no women representatives on the panel of the chairperson. Shazia Marri registered her concern about the absence of women on the panel(NAD, 29 Oct 2018). During the five Parliamentary years, in six sessions, there was no female MNA on the penal of chairperson. Munazza Hassan, Shazia Marri, Nafeesa Inayatullah Khattak, Shahida Akhtar Ali, Sajida Begum, Javaria Zafar Aheer, Aliya Kamran, and Kishwer Zahra served on the panel in the five years of Parliament (NAD,2018-2023).

### **3.8. Attendance of the Female MNAs**

The attendance percentage of women MNAs consistently shows higher attendance rates than their male counterparts. The most regular female lawmakers were Begum Tahira Bukhari, Mrs Musarrat Rafique Mahesar, Begum Shahida Akhtar Ali, and Shamim Ara Pahnwar.

In the first eight sessions till February 2019, on average, 83% of female and 71% of male lawmakers attended a National Assembly sitting. A female lawmaker in the National Assembly participated in an average of 39 (83%) sittings, while her male counterpart participated in an average of 33 (70%) sittings (FAFEN,2019).

Female representatives in the National Assembly attended an average of 67 (80%) sittings throughout the subsequent eleven sessions, which stretched from March 2019 to February 2020, compared to an average of 54 (66%) for her male counterparts. The average number of parliamentarians who attended a National Assembly sitting was 243, including 47 (68% of the total female NA membership) and 187 (69% of the total male NA membership). (FAFEN, 2020).

In the National Assembly, female lawmakers attended an average of 54 (76%) sittings between 2020 and 2021, compared to 42 (60%) for their male counterparts. On average, 215 parliamentarians attended each National Assembly, with 52 of them being female (75% of the NA's total female membership) and 163 being male (60% of the NA's total male membership) (FAFEN, 2021).

Female MNAs attended an average of 65 (76%) sittings between 2021 and 2022, while male MNAs attended an average of 52 (60%) sittings. Typically, 163 male MNAs (60 percent of the male membership) and 54 female MNAs (76% of the total female membership) attended each National Assembly session (FAFEN, 2022).

In the 2022-23 period, female Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) participated in an average of 57 sittings. In comparison, male MNAs attended an average of 46 sittings. Each National Assembly sitting saw an average attendance of 30 female MNAs, making up 67% of the female membership, alongside 89 male MNAs, who constituted 52% of the male membership (FAFEN, 2023).

### **3.9. Participation of Women in National Assembly Business**

Women not only got representation in the National Assembly but also were part of the National Assembly business. They actively participated in the Question Answer sessions, calling attention to notices and raising points of order and resolutions. Around eighty-five percent of the total women legislators participated during the five-year tenure. On average, 32 percent of questions, 51 percent of CANs, 43 percent of resolutions, and 35 percent of motions moved by female legislators.

The topics they speak about in the National Assembly are as follows:

- Public Health
- Education
- Human Rights
- Foreign Affairs
- Water Resources
- Commerce

#### **3.9.1. Women's Participation in Calling Attention Notices (CANs)**

Members may bring any urgent topic of public concern to the attention of the House, and ministers may make brief statements or request more time to do so. CAN must be submitted one day before the day the notice is to be considered.

In the five years of Parliament, women moved Calling Attention Notice on public issues, including health, sports, salaries, education, women's rights, etc. On average, 51 percent of the total CANs were submitted by women legislators or jointly sponsored by male and female legislators in the National Assembly agenda.

Women moved to CANs to address important issues in the country. A few are discussed below. In his National Assembly speech, Prime Minister Imran Khan announced giving citizenship to the refugees. Women from opposition benches, including Hina Rabbani Khar, Dr. Nafisa Shah, and others, raised questions regarding giving equal rights to Afghan refugees and illegal immigrants on a calling attention notice, which turned into a lengthy debate between opposition members and the Minister of Human Rights Dr Shireen Mazari. Dr. Nafisa and Hina Khar labeled Imran Khan's statement as irresponsible. Dr Mazari defended his leader by saying that the previous governments made U-turns on the refugees' issue; the prime minister has not made any irresponsible remarks. Dr Nafisa Shah claimed that granting citizenship to undocumented immigrants and refugees would be the same as taking away the rights of natives, and the prime minister ought to be aware of what was happening with Karachi. Party Politics was involved in this point in the debate. Dr. Mazari then questioned Dr. Nafisa about the PPP Sindh government's actions in the past ten years in Karachi. The minister also mentioned the verses of the Holy Quran concerning the rights of refugees and the privileges they enjoyed in the state of Madina. While answering the questions, Mazari said that previous governments had not collected any data about the refugees, but now the government is collecting data on refugees (NAD, 25 September 2018). Due to the opposition of the government and other complexities, this announcement by the prime minister could not take final legislation.

The female members also deliberated on the concerning issue of inflation in the country. Miss Tahira Aurangzeb brought this issue to the forefront, inquiring about the time needed to resolve the inflation issue. Minister of State for Finance Dr Aisha Ghaus elaborated on the reasons behind the inflation and assured the public that the government would take steps to control prices (NAD, 10 May 2022). Nasiba Chana presented another concern about the rising prices and inquired about government measures in flood-affected areas. Ms. Shamim Ara highlighted the challenges laborers face due to the high prices of essential items such as medicines, sugar, and oil. Minister Rana Muhammad Ishaq acknowledged the question and explained the government's policies (NAD, 03 August 2022). Aliya Kamran once again raised the issue of increased prices of essential food items during Ramazan (NAD, 06 April 2023).

Female legislator Aliya Hamza has drawn attention to a serious issue of alarming incidents of human trafficking that have cost many lives. The government minister has assured us that the authorities are fully aware of the situation and are taking necessary action. The minister

specifically highlighted 31 hot spot districts with high numbers of human trafficking cases. Aliya Hamza countered that it was the failure of the FIA (Federal Investigation Agency). Why are they not taking any action? Human trafficking has become a business. She pointed out the lack of employment opportunities as a contributing factor driving people to seek to leave the country. The interior minister responded that there were some black sheep in the department, and we assured them those measures had been taken against them. Additionally, the government is collaborating with international communities to dismantle the network of traffickers (NAD, 27 March 2023). Female legislators also moved CANs on non-payment of salaries, increase of pension, and suspension of employees in different departments. On health issues, women moved the attention of the House to poliovirus, dengue-virus, and monkeypox in different regions.

### **3.9.2. Participation in Question Answer Session**

According to Chapter XI of the Rules and Procedure of the National Assembly 2007, after the members' oath, the Holy Quran, and Naat are recited, the first hour of each sitting is given to questions and answers. Members of the House may ask questions to the relevant ministry during this session regarding any information on public or national affairs with a 15-day written notice. It is the procedure by which the ministries' actions about matters of public concern are held accountable.

During the five years, 55 women legislators asked questions. Three thousand five hundred three questions were asked by females, which is 35 percent of the total asked questions (FAFEN, 2023).

During the past five Parliamentary years, female legislators have used questions to assess the government's performance in various areas, such as updating infrastructure projects and dealing with foreign affairs. Below are a few questions to illustrate the nature of questions on important issues.

Ms. Shahida Rahmani inquired about the number of women who have been victims of honor killings (*Karo-Kari*) and acts of violence, as well as the incidents of rape in the past five years. Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari responded that from January 2014 to June 2018, there were 21012 registered cases involving 140003 women who were raped or subjected to gang rape. Additionally, there were 1548 cases of *Karo-Kari* and 45 cases of *Wanni*. Nafeesa Khattak inquired about implementing separate desks for women in police stations to avoid embarrassment and harassment. Minister Shireen Mazari mentioned that the government is

establishing a helpline and preparing a legal aid bill to address these concerns (NAD,05 November 2018).

The woman on a reserved seat for minorities, Ms Sunila Ruth, was vocal about minority rights. She asked whether it is a fact that quotas for employment are not observed in educational institutions. If it is implemented, who has been employed on the quota? The minister informed that there are 25828 employees from minorities on the quota in the federal government. Shunila Ruth argued that the answer is only about the federal government, while there is no data about the provinces of Pakistan (NAD,15 November 2019).

Women asked questions about the issues regarding public health. Ms Romina Khurshid Alam asked questions about the prices of the live savings medicines in the country and compared the prices with those of other South Asian countries. In the supplementary question, she asked where people would get those medicines that had higher prices. Where the poor people get those medicines. The Parliamentary secretary, Nousheen Hamid, replied that a review of the drug pricing policy is needed. Additionally, she said that when the government issues a notification on reducing the prices of medicines, pharmaceutical companies get stay orders from courts, which hinders the reduction of medicine prices. Ms. Nusrat Wahid inquired about the actions taken by the government to address the increase in tuberculosis (TB) (NAD, 06 January 2020).

Besides, these women inquired about schools, sports facilitation, imports and exports from different countries, infrastructure, and development.

### **3.9.3. Speeches of Women Legislators**

Female legislators from the government and opposition benches have done some excellent work giving suggestions and raising points. However, women Parliamentarians often seem offended by not getting the chance to present their views in the Assembly hall.

Women Parliamentarian Fahmida Mirza emphasizes the strengthening of institutions and transparency. She suggested the House should be used for public issues, not for politics. She criticizes the environment of the House as the politics involved and people lose confidence in democracy and the House due to the politicians (NAD, 06 March 2021).

In a discussion on the rape case of Lahore-Sialkot Motorway, Zartaj Gul, Hina Rabbani Khar, and others give suggestions and represent the women's emotions on this heinous act on the floor of the August House. Zartaj Gul was offended by political point-scoring from the Parliamentarians regarding this incident. She said that our social fabric is so weak that we do

victim blaming instead of punishing criminals. She suggested starting a national awareness campaign on this issue. Hina Rabbani Khar and Zartaj Gul suggest that the government should focus on implementing laws that promote equal rights. Hina Rabbani said that the conviction rate is five percent. How many criminals have been punished according to the laws that have already been passed? While pointing out the existing laws, she asked that the law of capital punishment means the death penalty for rape already exists; how many people have been sentenced to death? She focused on the solution by implementing the existing framework of laws rather than making more laws(NAD,15 September 2020).

Women legislators also talk about the water issue. Shazia Marri suggested that the water allocation for Karachi should be separate and mention droughts in Thar. She demanded that the 1991 Water Accord be implemented because the three-tier formula violates this accord. She requested the government to help with this issue (NAD, 27 October 2018). Fahmida Mirza also highlighted this issue. She said that Sindh is thirsty, and people are being killed alive (NAD, 24 May 2021).

Women also participated in budget discussions. In a discussion on the supplementary Budget, Shahida Begum said that there are 178 billion in taxes in the budget, which will create more hurdles for the salaried class. Ayesha Ghaus asked how to achieve two percent of the GDP budget deficit and a 2200 non-tax revenue plan (NAD, 18 September 2018). Besides this, in every budget session, she, as a finance expert, debates and gives suggestions about the budget. Women from Baluchistan often talk about the issues of the people. Ms Shahnaz Baloch, in the budget, mentioned the gas issue, literacy rate, and water issue for agriculture in Baluchistan (NAD, 18 July 2021).

Women legislators sometimes gave controversial statements when participating fully in the assembly hall. Asma Hadeed stated during an assembly debate that a decision was made between Muslims and Jews in a verse from the Quran, wherein the Muslims would face the Holy Ka'aba, and the Jews would face Jerusalem or the Al-Aqsa mosque. She went on to say that this verse should resolve the conflict between Muslims and Jews. She further asserted that Hazrat Ali (AS) and the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) had advised people to “*befriend your enemies.*” She continued by saying that we turn to insulting one another by slandering the Jewish people and demeaning them as well. She stated that using Darood e Ibrahim in *namaz*, we pray for all descendants of Ibrahim, including the Jewish and Christian clans, so we all are one. To put an end to the massacre of Muslims, the MNA proposed a treaty with the Jews, just as the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had done by signing numerous treaties with them (NAD, 30 October 2018).

The video of her speech went viral, causing the female legislator to face criticism from both religious and political groups. According to Sirajul Haq of Amir of Jamat-e-Islami, Asma Hadeed, a female member of the PTI, was either intentionally promoting the foreign agenda in this matter, or she was utterly unaware of Islamic teachings (*Free Online Library*, 2018). Later, the Foreign Office issued a statement reaffirming that Pakistan's position concerning Israel remains unchanged (Alvi, 2023). The female legislator has also clarified her earlier video statement.

The worthy assembly hall witnessed the chaos between political parties in government and opposition. Similarly, several women in their speeches criticized the other parties and blamed each other for the miserable condition of the country. Women Parliamentarians gave fiery speeches against each other and dragged politics rather than discussing the issues directly. The involvement of women in parliamentary affairs has proven beneficial and impactful. Numerous initiatives and discussions demonstrate that women can effectively undertake leadership roles. To enhance their influence, women could focus on building intra-party coalitions. These collaborations would help resources, ideas, and support, ultimately strengthening their positions within political spheres.

Additionally, women's advancement in emerging fields of economics and science is crucial. By gaining expertise in these areas, women can contribute significantly to national progress and innovation. This engagement positions them as key players in shaping policies that address contemporary challenges and help push the country forward in a competitive world.

While women have already made strides in leadership, there is an opportunity for further growth by fostering cooperation among political parties and excelling in vital sectors. These steps can lead to a more inclusive and progressive approach to governance and development.

### **3.10. Conclusion**

This chapter examined the active role of women in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan, focusing on their role in the federal cabinet, parliamentary secretary, and other parliamentary business. Women in the 15th National Assembly held important human rights, defense production, and climate change portfolios and performed incredible roles. Women substantively represent their society and gender. The women prioritize social reforms but also play effective roles in complex fields like the discussion on finance, foreign affairs, and defense production. This proves that women's inclusion in parliamentary politics is not only symbolic but also instrumental for the development of the country.

### **WOMEN-LED LEGISLATIVE REFORMS IN THE 15TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN: IMPACTS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF BILLS**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

The 15th National Assembly witnessed the active participation of women in assembly business; likewise, they influenced legislative reforms, marking an important step towards the gender-equality and true democratic essence. They were not only vocal but also initiated bills addressing public issues. Women legislators initiated forty-eight percent of the total bills individually or collaborated with the male legislators. Out of the total passed bills, women introduced 69 government bills, 23 private and seven bills jointly initiated. These bills focused on the issues of health, education, domestic violence, women and minority rights, and other marginalized groups. The involvement of female legislators reflects their interest and dedication towards their duty and ensures that they are truly represented on the assembly floor. This chapter aims to outline these women and the kind of legislation in which they have been participating. Thus, this chapter can elucidate women's development in the Pakistan Parliament and women's contribution to the legislation process through the detailed study of several bills.

#### **4.2. The Zainab Alert Act, Response and Recovery Act, 2020 (ACT XV 2020)**

The women-led legislative reforms in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan underline the importance of female-inclusive legislative strategies and their representation in legislation in addressing the diverse social issues impacting marginalized groups of society. In the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, landmark legislation titled *The Zainab Alert Act, Response and Recovery Act, 2020 (ACT XV 2020)* addressing the issue of child insecurity demonstrates the pivotal contributions of the women legislators in strengthening Pakistan's legislative framework through noteworthy reforms for child protection and women rights, showcasing their voices in the Parliament can morph a more inclusive legal landscape. However, the involvement of women legislators in the Act brought a more firm approach to policies addressing child abduction, abuse, murder, and gender-based violence. The objective of the Act was to establish a coordinated alert and recovery system like AMBER Alert in the United States for cases of missing children. First, it established a Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Agency (ZARRA) to manage the cases of child abductions (ZARRA, 2020). Second, it formulated a standardized process to facilitate the reporting of the cases. Thus, it promotes the notion of legislative protection that strengthens the law for children and women's rights in the country.

Historically, the country has faced numerous challenges in establishing a more comprehensive child protection system. Until the end of the 20th century, the issue was not the primary focus of the country's governing bodies. However, the Juvenile System Ordinance (2000) that aimed to protect children in the criminal justice system, the country's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, the reform efforts by NGOs and International Organizations, such as UNICEF and Save the Children, the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment in the Constitution of 1973 due to its role in giving access to provinces to establish region-specific child protection laws led to the recognition of the need of child protecting laws by the incumbent bodies. Besides, the tragic case of Zainab Ansari marked a turning point by highlighting legislative gaps in the system for addressing multi-pronged issues concerning the protection of minors. The awareness of these issues exacerbated the public demand for measures to liberate minors from the abyss of insecurity.

As far as the high-profile case is concerned, a seven-year-old girl named Zainab Ansari was tragically abducted, assaulted, and murdered in January 2018 in Kasur, Punjab. The dead body was recovered in a garbage heap, and graphic details added fuel to the shouldering fire burning inside the hearts of people (Dawn, 2018). As a result, the media widely paid attention to this case, showcasing the public response to the horrible tragedy. It led to massive nationwide protests expressing public outrage at the failure of law enforcement agencies to protect the children. Moreover, the police faced immense pressure, and people wanted a prompt response from the authorities (Chughtai, 2018). That is why authorities took quick measures to arrest the perpetrator, Imran Ali, who was later sentenced to death. The following points encapsulate the active role of women Parliamentarians in drafting and advocating for the Zainab Alert Bill, which aimed to ensure that this type of incident never happens again. In addition, the impacts and effectiveness of the Act marked the importance of diverse voices in legislation.

Coming to the point of leading features, the Bill established a standardized system, i.e., the creation of the ATCs, to facilitate a prompt response system and improve the measures for child protection (Chughtai, 2018). The following points cover the features of the Bill. First, it constituted a governmental agency titled Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Agency (ZARRA), which aimed to handle child abduction or murder cases (ZARRA, 2020). The agency coordinated with other law enforcement agencies and local and provincial authorities to ensure a quick response and recovery system to deal with cases of missing children. Second, it established an emergency alert system facilitating quick response to reports of such cases by issuing public notifications (ZARRA, 2020). For illustration, it established a central helpline 1099 for reporting cases of missing children that connected ZARRA and law enforcement agencies. Third, the Bill established a nationwide database to track these cases (ZARRA,

2020). Then, the government set up strict timelines to ensure rapid registration of the complaints for speedy recovery of missing children. However, it also imposed legal penalties on officials and bureaucrats if they delay responding to the report. In addition, the Bill led to the creation of training programs and enhanced awareness to handle such cases under an annual reporting system to ensure transparency and accountability of the system.

However, the active role of women Parliamentarians has remained pivotal in enacting the landmark bill because it shows the importance of feminine leadership in Parliament in supporting social justice, women, and human rights. Besides, the following leading female Parliamentarians took significant steps to pass the Bill. First, Sherry Rehman became one of the leading proponents of the Act in the upper chamber of Parliament. She became a vocal supporter of justice in the case, using her standing and platform to inform others about the urgent need for an Alert System. Moreover, she played a vital role in highlighting the legislative gaps in the Child Protection System and built a consensus among other legislators of the Senate and across the party for the approval of the Bill. Second, Mariam Aurangzeb played a meaningful role in promoting the Bill. She supported the Bill in the National Assembly by providing cross-party support. In addition, she emphasized the need for strict accountability of law enforcement agencies and officers in case of delayed response to such cases, which became a critical aspect of the Bill.

Similarly, Dr Shireen Mizari was the one leading the drafting of the bill. She ensured the inclusion of principle elements related to Child Protection in the Bill. In addition, she became a vocal supporter and raised community awareness by engaging herself with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to strengthen the provisions of the Bill. Another includes Romina Khurshid Alam, who reported the Zainab Alert Act to strengthen the vulnerable segments of society, such as children and women. Then, Shaista Parvez Malik was involved in the discussions to ensure a smooth passage of the Bill. Thus, the women legislators supported, advocated, and promoted the passage of the Act by taking the leading collaborative steps, which underline the importance of female leadership in the law-making process. They brought the critical legislation to fruition and championed the cause of child protection, particularly female protection.

As far as the impact and effectiveness of the Bill are concerned, the Act significantly impacted the course of legislative protection of minors in the country. It also highlighted the limitations and hindrances, such as financial constraints and regional disparities in enforcing quick action system by the incumbent authorities. The Act mandates increased awareness in local communities, whereas pressure on the police led to an improved response system, such as a response system within two hours of missing. However, it also increases the efficacy of the

Ministry of Human Rights, such as the establishment of ZARRA (ZARRA, 2020) under the Ministry of Human Rights. In addition, it established a national database to file the cases related to abduction. Nevertheless, the female advocacy boasted up the process of its enforcement. Besides, its implementation has certain limitations, such as corruption, bureaucratic hurdles, policy inconsistency, and lack of financial resources.

To conclude, the formulation of the Act demonstrates the pivotal contributions of the women legislators in strengthening the country's legislative framework through noteworthy reforms for child protection and women's rights, showcasing their voices in the Parliament can morph into a more inclusive legal landscape. First, it established a coordinated alert and recovery system and formulated a standardized process for reporting the cases of child abductions. For example, the creation of the ATCs (Anti-Terrorism Court) to facilitate prompt response to child abduction cases to improve the measures for child protection. In addition, it facilitated quick response by issuing public notifications about such cases. However, the Bill led to the creation of a nationwide database to track abduction cases. Besides, the active role of women Parliamentarians has remained pivotal in enacting the landmark Bill. It shows the importance of feminine leadership in Parliament in supporting social justice, women, and human rights.

#### **4.3. National Commission on the Status of Women (Amendment) Act 2021 (Act No. XIX of 2021)**

Institutionalizing women's rights and promoting gender equality through legislative means by female legislators determine their bipartisan commitment to the national cause of uplifting the status of women in society. However, it also highlighted the need and significance of women legislators in lawmaking. Indubitably, the Bill titled *National Commission on the Status of Women (Amendment) Bill-2021* reflects strengthening the broader role of women in national politics. The bill meant to amend the National Commission on the Status of Women Act 2012, Section 6, and Act VIII of 2012, which established a statutory body titled National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) to strengthen women's rights and gender equality (NCSW Act, 2012). As the institution of NCSW is explicitly working for women's emancipation, empowering the statutory body means empowering women nationally. Not only did the Act directly strengthen the continuity of NCSW, but it also empowered women by enhancing the prospect of their legitimate position in an unprecedented way. Moreover, the involvement of women legislators in the Act brought a more pragmatic approach to policies regarding the term of office to the chairperson of the NCSW.

Historically, the operational scope of this significant statutory body (NCSW) has remained limited in the state. However, these limitations have also compromised the autonomy by creating hurdles in empowering NCSW as an autonomous working institution. Section 6, part

1 of the National Commission on the Status of Women Act of 2012, provided that a person appointed as the Chairperson and Member shall hold office for three years. The term of the office may be extended only once (NCSW Act 2012). It did not restrict extensions that hindered continuity in leadership and created hurdles in its institutionalization. So, with the growing challenges to gender equality, empowering NCSW has become a priority of advocates of women's rights. The NCSW (Amendment) Bill 2021 omitted the clause, providing that the period of office will be extended only once. In addition, the Bill was passed by both houses of Parliament; however, without amendment by the Senate on 27th September 2021, President Arif Alvi gave assent to it on 15th October 2021 (NCSW Act, 2021).

As far as the features of the Act are concerned, the amendment entailed omitting the clause, with an extension limited to only once, of the chairperson and members of the Commission to provide feasible opportunities to new members so the new ones can have the chance to bring a realistic approach to the Commission (Senate Report on Bill 2021). As per the reasons and objects mentioned in the Bill, the Commission will benefit from the fresh ideas of the new members to uplift the status of women. In addition, it gives opportunity to the new ones to bring a more pragmatic approach to the Commission (NCSW Act 2021).

Then, the role of women Parliamentarians and their contributions have remained pivotal and instrumental in pushing and passing the Bill. However, it also shows their bipartisan contribution to bringing structural reforms to the much-needed institution. The following leading women Parliamentarians actively support the passage of the Bill. First, Aliya Kamran presented the Bill to the National Assembly (NCSW Act 2021). Second, Dr Shireen Mazari, was leading the drafting of the Bill. For illustration, according to the report of the Senate Committee, the Bill was supported by the minister of human rights. Thus, she facilitated the passage of the proposed amendment in the instant Bill. Third, Shazia Marri also significantly promoted the Bill, showcasing her bipartisan commitment to upholding women's rights. Then, they worked with civil society organizations, especially The Aurat Foundation, to strengthen the additional backing to the Bill. Thus, they brought national attention to the gravest challenges to the need for women's representation in the policymaking confronting society to the depth of its roots.

Moreover, the Act significantly impacted and enhanced the autonomy of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW). Adding more, it enhanced the Commission's ability and authority to complete its mandate, highlighting the position of female legislators in advancing legislation regarding gender equality. In addition, the role of women Parliamentarians in promoting the Bill showcases their bipartisan commitment to upholding women's rights. One of the groundbreaking effects of the Bill led to the formation of the

National Gender Data Portal (NGDP) in 2021, which was developed in cooperation with the UN Women, gathers data on gender disparities, identifies legislative gaps, and monitors the effectiveness of gender-related policies. Thus, it is evident that the Act has multi-pronged advantages. It exacerbated the institution's capacity to reach greater visibility of its agendas. In conclusion, the Bill can be regarded as a step forward in institutionalizing women's rights and gender equality. Besides, it enhanced the efficacy of the Commission by omitting the restrictions presented in clause 6 of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Act of 2012. It led to the institutionalization of women's rights and the promotion of gender equality through legislative means by female legislators due to their bipartisan commitment to the national cause of uplifting the status of women in society. However, it also highlighted the urgency of the need for women legislators in lawmaking. Hence, the bill reflects the strengthening of the broader role of women in national politics.

#### **4.4. The Islamabad Capitol Territory Domestic Worker Act, 2022**

In Pakistan, the contribution of domestic workers to the economy is significant as working families in the cities of Islamabad capital, Lahore, and Karachi- an economic hub depend on domestic workers to fulfill their household chores. However, despite their essential contribution, they encounter issues of harassment, exploitation, and abuse, especially in vulnerable segments of society. To deal with the ills, the government passed The Islamabad Capitol Territory Domestic Worker Act in 2022 (Act No XXC of 2022). The Act has provided legal protection for domestic workers' rights, welfare, and security in ICT (ICT Act 2022). According to the Gazette of Pakistan, the Act aimed to regulate the employment of domestic workers in ICT. In addition, it also explicitly provided legal protection to children, showcasing the country's firm approach toward emancipating children from the abyss of child labor. One leading aspect of the Act symbolizes its multi-pronged advantages to women, as children are the most employed for domestic chores. Besides, the role of women Parliamentarians in pushing and promoting its passage has remained inevitable in understanding the scope and significance of female legislatures in dealing with social issues at a broader level.

Over the past couple of decades, several cases have been reported regarding vulnerabilities associated with child labor and women domestic workers. Moreover, the government highlighted the dire need to address the issues and take one step forward to fill the legislative gaps regarding the rights of domestic workers. However, the role of women Parliamentarians, along with women rights groups like the Aurat Foundation and the Women Action Forum, in demonstrating the urgency to take legislative reforms has remained significant in passing the Act. In addition, the country's commitment to international platforms, such as the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), further

provided a reason for developing such reforms. Titled the Islamabad Capital Territory Domestic Worker Act in 2022 (Act No XXC of 2022), the Act received the assent of President Dr. Arif Alvi on 21 October 2022 and was passed on 24 October 2022.

Apart from this, the leading features of the Act provided for the prohibition of child labor. For illustration, clause 3 of the Act titled Prohibition on Employment provided that no child under sixteen shall be allowed to work in a household in any capacity. Furthermore, the Act formalized domestic work by enabling explicit legislative protections for workers. Thus, the Act strengthened access to requisite wages and a secure working environment by formalizing domestic work. The Act prohibited any discrimination, such as according to clause 4(b) “in recruitment, the continuation of employment, as well as decisions regarding wages, benefits, and other rights, should not be based on factors such as religion, race, caste, creed, sex, ethnic background, place of birth, residence, domicile, migration, or any other specific employment criteria that require a minimum level of strength or educational qualifications, or that pose a risk of physical danger to a particular group of people”. Thus, it promotes equitable distribution of wealth at the provincial level and is a one-step forward to uplift the marginalized section of society.

However, the role of women Parliamentarians has remained crucial in pushing the passage of the Act. They championed the rights of one of the most vulnerable labor groups, especially women and children. The following female legislators actively participated in the passage of the Act. First, the role of Mehnaz Akbar, the then member of the National Assembly, who presented the Bill to the National Assembly, has been leading in delivering the Bill. Then, Senator Sherry Rahman, a federal minister to the Ministry of Climate Change, who moved the Bill in the Senate, has been instrumental in passing the Act. (Senate Debate, ICT Act). Second, Dr. Shireen Mazari was among the leading figures in drafting the Bill. Third, Shazia Marri and Nafisa Shah actively advocated for the Act by emphasizing domestic workers' dire and insurmountable conditions and the faltering working environments.

Moreover, the Act encourages the formalization of domestic work to prevent workers from abuse, exploitation, and harassment. For illustration, domestic workers in Islamabad are now legally acknowledged as part of the labor force, having the benefits of fair salary, health, and leave benefits. However, there are certain limitations to its applicability, such as some employers feel reluctant to accept the terms and conditions of the new system. The Act affects a registration system to establish transparent working conditions and improve the wage system, but lack of monitoring caused implementation issues. In addition, the Act strengthened security conditions for domestic workers. It also highlighted the legislative gaps in the protection of

domestic workers by encouraging awareness among the workers' group, but there are limitations in the reach of the awareness campaigns.

In conclusion, the passing of the Act symbolizes the unparalleled commitment of female legislators to uplift the vulnerable segments of society. It also reflects how female-inclusive legislative measures can bring positive social change. The Act strengthened security conditions for domestic workers. However, the ICT Domestic Worker Act 2022 demonstrates the country's pragmatic approach to addressing the issues regarding domestic workers. Domestic workers in Islamabad are now legally acknowledged as part of the labor force and have fair salary, health, and leave benefits. However, the role of women Parliamentarians and their contributions have remained leading and significant in pushing and passing the Bill.

#### **4.5 The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2020**

Domestic violence has remained an insurmountable social issue affecting women and children psychologically, sexually, emotionally, and physically in the long run. Besides, the government has taken significant measures to abate the issue, but policy inconsistency and lack of implementation prevent the desired results. For illustration, the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2013 was aimed at protecting the victims of domestic violence and punishing the incumbents. However, implementation issues led to the inefficiency of the legislative measures and restricted their efficacy and strength in decreasing the issue. Myriad activist organizations and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), namely the Aurat Foundation, Shirkat Gah, and other organizations, actively advocate for the cause and highlight the urgency to take reforms by filling the legislative gaps. As a result, the government passed *The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2020*. The bill was aimed at establishing an effective system of relief, protection, and rehabilitation of women, children, elders, and any vulnerable person against domestic violence (The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2020). Next, the role of women Parliamentarians in initiating, supporting, and advocating highlights the significance of women-inclusive legislative remedies in sustaining a peaceful and developed society.

The background factors encapsulate the need to take legislative reform to tackle the menace of violence, aggression, suppression, and exploitation. A myriad of socio-cultural and legislative factors led to the formulation of the Act. First, many incidents of domestic violence have been reported in the past couple of decades. Second, although the issue of domestic abuse was addressed in the Act of 2013, there were many legislative gaps necessary to establish comprehensive federal legislation and a uniform law on these matters, which could apply all over the country. Third, strong advocacy by civil society organizations and NGOs through

awareness campaigns enhanced the public demand for reforms. Fourth, as the country is a signatory to various international treaties, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), there has been a growing demand and pressure to take concrete steps against this specter. Then, the impact of the #MeToo movement has significantly motivated people to speak against the criminal act of domestic abuse. It led to strong advocacy by the people to take reforms to tackle the issue.

According to the Ministry of Human Rights, the Act provided for establishing an effective system for the protection, relief, and rehabilitation of women, children, the elderly, and other vulnerable individuals against domestic violence. The key feature of the Act includes its aim to establish a clear and comprehensive legislative framework for the prevention of any domestic abuse (Ministry of Human Rights, 08 July 2020). Now, the victims of domestic violence can take legal protection orders. For illustration, the Restraint Order to abstain the abuser from approaching the victim, Monetary Relief to provide financial support to the victim of domestic violence, and Custody orders to protect children in the case. Then, the Act provided for the appointment of protection officers to safeguard victims to provide them access to basic needs. These officers would also help the victim to approach court or police. In addition, the provision of rehabilitation centers and counseling services are also established by the Act. According to the Act, If the act of domestic violence is not covered by the Pakistan Penal Code, it can lead to imprisonment ranging from a minimum of six months to a maximum of three years, based on the seriousness of the offense. In addition, it implies the perpetrator's fine, punishment, and imprisonment (Domestic Violence Act, 2020).

However, the role of women Parliamentarians in initiating, pushing, advocating, and facilitating the Act has remained crucial in highlighting different aspects of domestic violence that need robust analysis and legislative remedies. The following female legislatures play a vital role in the passage of the Act. First, Dr Shireen Mazari, the Minister of Human Rights, had a leading role in initiating, advocating, and promoting the Bill (DV Act 2020). According to the official reports and interviews by the Ministry of Human Rights, she highlighted the need to implement the obligation of CEDAW. Other women Parliamentarians played a significant role in raising awareness, such as Dr. Fahmida Mirza, the former speaker of the National Assembly and senior Parliamentarian, who supported the protection of women against domestic violence. According to Sindh Assembly records and provincial debates, Shazia Marri has remained a vocal advocate of women's rights and highlighted the menace of domestic violence on several occasions. Thus, the active contribution of female legislatures in demonstrating the pressing need to address the specter has remained inevitable to bring legislative reforms in the form of this Act.

Coming to impacts and effectiveness, the Act marked a landmark contribution of the country in combating domestic violence by providing legal security and increasing public awareness around the issue. It provides access to a multi-pronged strategy and a formalized legal protection system to address the issue of domestic violence. It is comprehensive in nature, so it has the potential to cover a broad range of domestic violence that falls under the domestic sphere. Apart from its impact, there are challenges in its implementation, such as policy inconsistency, lack of cultural acceptance, and delay in response to such issues. One of the leading reasons determines cultural nonacceptance, as people consider domestic violence as a personal issue. However, women are often accused in a patriarchal society and considered as a prime reason behind abuse. Despite a lack of acknowledgment, the Act recognized domestic violence as a crime. It enhanced the scope of support services, but there is a lack of availability in rural areas. In addition, it enables data collection and monitoring of such cases to devise better policies. However, a lack of consistency in data collection may have marred the effectiveness of this step. The penalties and financial compensation provide relief to the victims, but bureaucratic hurdles create obstacles in the way of accessing the fiscal sources. In a nutshell, the Act demonstrates a groundbreaking achievement in formalizing legislative safeguards for the victims of domestic exploitation. It can also be regarded as a one-step forward in filling the legislative gaps to tackle the menace of social evil. Despite several limitations, the Act successfully raised awareness about the complexity of the specter. However, the female legislative actively participated in every step in the development of the Act from initiation to development; their contributions highlighted their unwavering commitment to the national cause of a better society. Indubitably, the country's fragmented and patriarchal society has many faces. The marginalized groups of society often face a lack of consideration because there is a lack of visibility, which is necessary for aspiring politicians. Women in Parliament provide the ability to view the other sides of society, especially the marginalized women and children.

#### **4.6 The Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2020**

Property ownership of women has remained less acknowledged worldwide through the ages. As a result, in the 20th century, feminist movements called for legislative protection of women's rights and gender equality to put society out of the abyss of gender biases. In the case of Pakistan, despite explicit disbursement of inheritance and property rights, women are often deprived of their rightful share. However, it led to the appeal by female legislators, activist organizations, and the public for a clear law that facilitates females to obtain their due property shares. As a result, the government enacted The Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act 2020, a landmark contribution to promoting gender equality by providing legislative protection

for women's property rights (WPR Act 2020). The Act provided women a right to ask for compensation in case of deprivation of property. In addition, the appellant shall be provided with law enforcement support to deal with threats. Besides, the impacts of the Act highlight that women can seek legal assistance and security to get their due share of property. Its gender-sensitive reform, thus, has several limitations, such as lack of awareness, obstacles in implementation, policy inconsistency, and social resistance. Apart from this, the Act symbolizes the efforts of women legislators to throw light on much-needed reforms for marginalized women. Thus, the Act encourages the provision of property rights to women, strengthening women's rights and gender equality.

History has remained evident in how women have been deprived of inheritance and property rights globally. According to the reason described in the Bill passed by the National Assembly on property rights, women in Pakistan are being deprived of their rightful property share by their male family members by coercive means, such as fraud, fabrication, forgery, and cheating (WPR Act, 2020). The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw increasing awareness regarding the dismal condition of women in different spheres of life. Resultantly, myriad feminist movements advocated for legal protection to ensure women get their rightful share. However, the cross-border effects of the feminist movements impacted the gradual establishment of women's activist organizations in Pakistan. These organizations advocated, promoted, and raised voices against discrimination on socio-political and economic grounds. As a result, the government provided legal protection for women's property rights, but social barriers prevented the implementation of the laws. Therefore, by considering the need to fill legislative gaps and to empower existing laws, the state enacted the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act 2020.

According to the Bill passed by the National Assembly of Pakistan, the Bill aimed to provide legal protection for the rights of ownership and possession of properties by women. Furthermore, it also ensures its implementation to abstain from violation of law by harassment, coercion, force, or fraud. The following points enclose the leading features of the Act. First, it led to the development of the Redressal Mechanism so women could seek compensation in case of deprivation of property rights. The regulation of the redressal mechanism is sustained with a provision that the appellant has been provided with law enforcement support to deal with threats. For illustration, according to clause 3 of the Bill passed in the National Assembly, the ombudsman authorized under the Act has the same power, functions, and authority as are conferred in the Ombudsman for the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 (IV of 2010). Second, the Act establishes a swift resolution system for a quick legal process for handling the cases. According to clause 4, in case of delayed

proceedings in court, women can file a complaint with the appointed authority to initiate an action to restore the possession. Fourth, the appellant shall be provided with law enforcement support, such as police and district authorities, to deal with threats in asserting the demand regarding inheritance (WPR Act 2020).

From initiation to completion, women Parliamentarians played a vital role in the development and enactment of the Act. First, the foundation for the Act was laid by Dr. Fahmida Mirza, who supported the initiatives asserting women's inheritance rights. Second, Shireen Mazari, the Ministry of Human Rights, has been among the leading figures promoting the cause. She highlighted legislative gaps for gender-based legal justice and advocated for reforms (MHR). Third, Asma Qadeer, a member of the National Assembly and Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf, and Mehnaz Akbar Aziz, highlighted the systematic challenges women have been facing in asserting inheritance rights by referring to the social challenges. Then, Maleeka Bokhari, the Parliamentary Secretary for Law and Justice, has remained explicitly involved in the proceedings of the Bill. Her role in refining the provisions of the Bill has been instrumental in strengthening the Act. In the National Assembly, Zartaj Gul, an MNA and Minister of State for Climate Change, highlighted the necessity of the Act by highlighting its importance for women's economic empowerment. In the final stage, the role of Shazia Marri, has remained instrumental, showcasing her bipartisan commitment to strengthening women's rights (Senate & NA Debates, 2021)

However, the notable impact of this significant piece of legislation includes increased acceptability for the inheritance rights of women. In addition, the Act formalized property rights by providing legal protection through legal means for women; however, it also improved legal access to file complaints in case of deprivation because the traditional appeal system in court was often marked by delays, which hindered quick processing. Thus, the Act strengthens the provision of fundamental rights, gender equality, and women's rights. The limitations of the Act marked a lack of accessibility and awareness of the law, policy inconsistency, and delays in rural areas. Besides, the Act also promoted the state's agenda regarding women's economic empowerment by providing them with a secure way to access their rightful share of property. Hence, it reduces women's vulnerability to poverty.

In a nutshell, the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act 2020 is a landmark contribution to promoting gender equality by providing legislative protection for women's property rights. According to the Bill passed by the National Assembly of Pakistan, the Bill aimed to provide legal protection for the rights of ownership and possession of properties owned by women. Furthermore, it also ensures its implementation to abstain from violation of law by harassment, coercion, force, or fraud. It led to the development of the Redressal Mechanism so women

could seek compensation in case of deprivation of property rights. Additionally, the Act establishes a swift resolution system for a quick legal process for handling the cases. However, from initiation to completion, women Parliamentarians played a vital role in the development and enactment of the Act. Also, the Act has increased the acceptability of women's inheritance rights and strengthened the provision of fundamental rights, gender equality, and women's rights.

#### **4.7 Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act, 2021**

Freedom of expression, regardless of potential threat, danger, or exploitation to one's life, determines the applicability of democratic laws in a country; however, journalists are the prime figures who represent the public opinion and demands before the government, so the incumbents can legislate while considering public necessities. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, despite being a democratic country, journalists face a challenging environment in the form of life-threatening abuse and exploitation. Therefore, the state formulated influential legislation titled the *Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act 2021* to counter the issues and provide security to media personnel. According to the Bill passed by the National Assembly, the Act aims to promote, protect, and effectively ensure journalists' and media professionals' safety, independence, impartiality, and freedom of expression (Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act, 2021). The Act formalized and gave legal protection to the rights of media personnel. However, it prohibited any harassment, exploitation, or influencing by coercive means to journalists. For this reason, a commission has been established to safeguard the rights of journalists. Besides, the role of women Parliamentarians in promoting, advocating, and pushing the Act has remained influential. The Act has the potential to significantly impact women's inclusion in journalism by providing a security mechanism, opening the doors of opportunity for them, strengthening women's rights, and promoting gender equality.

The reasons behind the formulation of the Act were growing public demand for reforms, increasing international pressure, and legislative gaps in the existing laws regarding the safety of media professionals. As discussed earlier, according to the Act, approved by the National Assembly, seeks to promote, safeguard, and guarantee the independence, impartiality, safety, and freedom of expression for journalists and media professionals. Constitutionally, Article 19 of the Constitution of 1973 provided that it is the responsibility of the state to safeguard the right to freedom of expression. The country is also a signatory of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), whose Article 19 provides freedom of expression in writing, printing, art, or through media. Furthermore, growing attacks on journalists highlighted the urgency of immediate constitutional reforms. For illustration, the high-profile cases of Hayatullah Khan(2006) and Saleem Shahzad (2011) highlighted a perceptive

challenge to the life of journalists (Dawn). Organizations such as Reporters without Borders (RSF) and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) ranked the country as one of the most vulnerable for journalists.

In addition, the growing influence of non-state actors and militants in the provinces of Baluchistan and KPK exacerbated threats, and the lack of a conducive environment restricted media professionals from talking on controversial topics. Other international organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW), alongside media activist organizations, raised voices to protect media persons through legislative means. Similarly, local media, journalist unions, and civil society organizations vehemently advocated for reforms. To prevent threats to journalists, national organizations, such as the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) and the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE), highlighted the need for legislative protection to fill the existing gaps (PFUJ and CPNE).

Besides, the *Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act 2021* is extended all over the country. According to Clause 3 (1) of the Act, the government will provide legal security and protection to the life of journalists against any ill-treatment, ensuring Article 9 of the Constitution of 1973. It also ensures privacy and non-disclosure of sources in case of controversial issues. Further, Clause 5 (1) of the Act provided freedom of work to media personnel. For protection from abusive behavior, according to Clause 7 of the Act, the government shall take all measures to protect journalists and media professionals from all forms of abuse, violence, and exploitation through any avenue. However, Clause 9 (1) of the Act enables the formation of a Journalist Welfare Scheme (JWS) to train the media persons adequately. It also provided both a system for accessing life and health insurance. Apart from this, Clause 10 (1) provided for the formulation of a Redressal Mechanism for the security of journalists as well as the system to penalize the perpetrators in case of threat. (Act) Furthermore, Clause 12 (1) of the Act provided for the formation of a separate commission titled Commission for the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals (CPJMP) for the protection of journalists and media personnel.

Initiation, advocacy, promotion, and support symbolize the role of women in passing the Act. However, the following female Parliamentarians played a vital and instrumental role in initiating, processing, and promoting the passage of the Act. First, Dr. Shireen Mazari, presented the Bill in the National Assembly. She has advocated for media personnel's freedom of expression and security. Apart from this, she remained actively involved in the passage of the Bill and tried to align its provisions with international standards, such as those of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (PJMP Act 2021). In the sessions of Parliament, Maleeka Bokhari (MNA) and

Romina Khurshid Alam explicitly advocated for the Bill, showcasing their bipartisan commitment to national development. Highlighting the feminine aspect, Shazia Marri, a member of the National Assembly, highlighted the vulnerabilities faced by women journalists and the need for immediate constitutional reforms. It shows the importance of feminine leadership in Parliament in supporting social justice, women, and human rights.

Apart from this, the impacts and effectiveness of the Act include its efficacy in increasing legal protection for journalists and media professionals. The Act has strengthened the provision of fundamental rights provided by the Constitution of 1973 regarding the right to security, freedom of expression, and liberty. It has formalized legal protection for journalists against violence, intimidation, life threats, and abuse. As a separate commission established under the Act, it has the potential to contribute effectively against the crimes. However, capacity building must be the government's foremost priority for its smooth and uninterrupted functioning. Furthermore, the Act decreases the impunity for crimes committed against media personnel by establishing a swift mechanism for investigating crimes in case of controversies. In addition, it also promoted gender equality by including gender-sensitive measures because one dark side of the picture shows the unique nature of crimes committed against female journalists. Hence, promoting gender equality and women's rights in the media also contributed to increasing societal awareness about feminine empowerment, laws, and rights. Furthermore, the protective measures that have been taken under the provisions of the Act have the potential to ensure a secure working environment for the media. The establishment of emergency measures can help to swift responses that work better for female journalists. The formation of a special commission is one step forward in establishing not only a secure but a supportive system.

In a nutshell, the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act 2021 was enacted by the government to counter security issues for journalists and media personnel. It prohibited any harassment, exploitation, or influencing of any journalist by coercive means to journalists. The reasons behind the formulation of the Act were growing public demand for reforms, increasing international pressure, and legislative gaps in the existing laws regarding the safety of media professionals. According to the Act, the government will provide legal security and protection to the life of journalists against any ill-treatment. The Act provided freedom of work to media personnel. It enables the formation of the Journalist Welfare Scheme (JWS) to train the media persons adequately and provide a system for accessing life and health insurance with a Redressal Mechanism for the security of journalists as well as the system to penalize the perpetrators in case of threat. However, the role of female legislatures in promoting, initiating, and advocating the Act shows the importance of feminine leadership in Parliament in supporting social justice, women, and human rights. Besides, the Act has strengthened the

provision of fundamental rights provided by the Constitution of 1973 regarding the right to security, freedom of expression, and liberty. In addition, it also promoted gender equality by including gender-sensitive measures in the provisions.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

In conclusion, women legislators focus on passing laws addressing the key societal issues. The reforms introduced by women in the 15th National Assembly, such as the Zainab Alert Act, Domestic Violence Act, and Islamabad Domestic Worker Act, aim to tackle gender disparities, violence, and economic disadvantage through effective legal measures. By supporting laws like the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act and the NCSW Amendment Act, these legislators sought to enhance accountability and empowerment of women. However, the success of these reforms depends on overcoming challenges related to implementation, including cultural resistance, bureaucratic delays, and lack of resources. The achievements of the 15th Assembly highlight the impact of women's leadership in lawmaking, establishing a foundation for future reforms that can turn legislative progress into real societal equity through ongoing enforcement, awareness, and supportive policies.

### **CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

As half the country's population, women must play a crucial and significant role in every sphere of society. The government of Pakistan has shown concern about providing space to women in politics. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973 guarantees equal rights for women. It ensures fundamental rights for all individuals, regardless of gender, and emphasizes explicitly in Article 34 the importance of women's full participation in every sphere of national life. As discussed in Chapter Two, A gender quota was given to the women to enhance their representation in Parliament. In 2002, during the rule of Pervaiz Musharraf, the quota was extended to 17 percent. Furthermore, in the Elections Act 2017, five percent of party tickets must be given to female candidates. Despite all these significant advancements, women still face barriers in politics that hinder them from contributing fully to the legislative and decision-making process in the Parliamentary politics of Pakistan. This chapter aims to identify and examine the challenges confronting female Parliamentarians and provide recommendations to cope with the challenges.

#### **5.2. Paramount Challenges Faced by the Parliamentarians**

Women in this male-dominated field face several challenges that impact women's representation and participation in the National Assembly. The Inter-Parliamentary Union reports that Pakistan ranks 115th out of 190 countries regarding women's political representation, underlining the systemic and socio-cultural hindrances that limit women's participation in politics. Several key factors contribute to this issue, including a patriarchal mindset, restricted mobility, low literacy rates, financial challenges, decision-making abilities, structural impediments to political and leadership engagement, as well as violence and harassment in both public and private settings. Furthermore, women often bear a disproportionate responsibility of family and household (UN Women,2023).

The following challenges are discussed below:

- Socio-Culture Barriers
- Economic Challenges
- Role Of Media
- Psychological Constraints
- Political Parties

- Internal Challenges

### **5.2.1. Socio-Cultural Barriers**

Most women Parliamentarians in Pakistan face high socio-cultural obstacles that hinder them from effectively playing their role in politics. Role division based on gender and restrictive social etiquette typically confines women to internal household chores, reducing mobility and restricting public interaction (Naseer & Kalsoom, 2019). Stereotypes about women being less capable or less fit for leadership positions further marginalize female politicians. This patriarchal nature of society varies in different regions and urban and rural areas. It is much stronger in rural areas, limiting women from creating more career choices. In most cases, women are restricted from following the orders of the male head of the family, which often restrains them from education and making professional life.

One of the critical challenges is balancing professional and family lives because society places a disproportionate burden on females to balance their household and professional duties. Inadequate childcare facilities and a lack of support systems make it harder to maintain balance. This challenge prevents women from coming into politics (Sohail, 2019).

Besides this, in Pakistani culture, women's sexuality is also linked to the notion of honor (*izzat*). It is believed that if women interact with the male outside their family, it will negatively impact the family's honor. This leads to unjustified public/private and indoor/outdoor life maintenance based on honor (*izzat*) (Gul & Farooq, 2009). Moreover, gender-based harassment adds fuel to the fire; although there are laws in the country against harassment, it is still a grumbling issue in society.

These factors contain consequences not only in limiting options for women but also in dampening their potential through a decrease in confidence and acceptance within the socio-political sphere. Women in politics confirm the socio-cultural issues they face. In reply to the researcher's question, Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar said women are less accepted in politics by society due to gender-biased societal norms and culture. In their interviews, other female MNAs like Zartaj Gul discussed the struggle for acceptance in a male-dominated society as female politicians from tribal areas. Zubaida Jalal claimed that women had to work ten times harder than men to reach every milestone in life.

### **5.2.2. Economic Challenges**

Money is one of the most essential factors in Pakistani politics, and the lack of economic strength makes it an obstacle for politicians. Likewise, the participation of women in politics

is also linked to financial independence, but Females are often financially dependent on their male family members. Economically dependent women are consistently more oppressed than women with higher economic positions and participation because they lack access to and control of productive resources, which limits their ability to play a political role. According to the global gender gap index report 2024, Pakistan ranked 143 out of 146 countries in economic participation and opportunity (Pal, Piaget, & Zahidi, 2024). Hence, women who want to get involved in politics face significant obstacles due to limited access to finance, campaign support, and financial resources. Social norms and traditional gender roles might limit women's economic autonomy and make it challenging for them to compete with men on an equal basis. Their overall political power is reduced because of financial limitations, frequently making it difficult for them to hold strong and competitive elections.

### **5.2.3. Role of Media**

The world has become a global village. Everyone has access to social media and shares their views on every topic, which is beneficial and sometimes disturbing. If we look at the positive side, it helps politicians stay connected with their people and run political campaigns efficiently. As Dr. Saweera Parkash mentioned that, social media helped her a lot to build her connection with people, and it was social media that helped her run the campaign, and she got support from Pakistan and outside the country. On the other hand, the negative side is that social media is an ocean of information. Filtering the correct information has become difficult, often bringing unnecessary criticism and chaos. AI and technology have gone so far, and people misuse them to defame politicians by making objectionable deepfake videos and photos. Recently, the Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was the victim of a deep-fake video where she met with the UAE politician. The video was widely shared on the internet, but it was later revealed that it was a fake AI-generated video. Other cases like Azma Bhukari and Zartaj Gul bring the storm to the internet. Besides, YouTube videos use objectionable thumbnails and titles that objectify women politicians rather than focusing on their work.

Besides social media, the mainstream media also discriminates against women in their coverage. Women's rights expert Ms Rukhshanda Naz provided valuable statistics on the amount of airtime given to female candidates running in the 2018 general elections on different TV channels. According to her, even the national channel PTV gave female candidates only 4% of the airtime, which was less than other private channels(Express TV 7%, ARY 5%).

#### **5.2.4. Psychological Constraints**

Women serving in political positions and Parliamentary politics experience psychological problems that affect their ability to function effectively and maintain their wellness. Gender discrimination, together with bias, produces stress as well as anxiety. Female politicians experience debilitating pressure in an institution where males dominate their space. Females receive more intense public criticism in politics than male politicians, which produces adverse consequences for their mental health. Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar mentioned that women face psychological challenges, especially when they face character assassination because women are more sensitive regarding this issue. Women encounter numerous psychological impediments that recreate multiple obstacles that deter their development and advancement within politics (Nagra, Arshad, Riaz, & Ayub, 2024).

#### **5.2.5. Discrimination by the Political Parties**

Political parties claim to be the advocates of gender equality, but at the same time, they lack practical measures to ensure gender equality in representation. Elections Act 2017 implementation was successful as more women contested the 2018 general election than in any previous election. Still, Azhar and others (2018) claimed that more than forty-five political parties efficiently gave a five percent quota to female candidates: he showed grievance that the ECP did not act against those political parties. Secondly, political parties hesitate to give tickets to females, especially to important constituencies. Female Parliamentarians also highlight this issue. Ms Zubaida Jalal highlighted at the Asia regional conference that political parties gave tickets to women in areas where the party thinks it is not a winnable constituency. The Hamida Hazara expressed a similar point of view.<sup>7</sup> Political parties are awarded general seats in areas where women or parties are not electable or the women in that area do not have the vote bank under religious or tribal influence. Ms. Nousheen Iftikhar agreed to the point of hesitating to give tickets to females. She further added that there is a general perception that women are a weak segment of society, as do the parties' beliefs. She said parties do not easily trust women unless they do not have any political background.

Secondly, within the political parties, females find it hard to get the role of leadership or in decision-making positions. They feel that they are more scrutinized and need more hard work

---

<sup>7</sup> Hamida Hazara is the member of Youth Association for Development (YAD) Quetta. YAD initiated a project titled as “ Women’s Participation in Elections, Politics, Leadership, Democracy in Pakistan”. This project aims to enhance women's political participation in Quetta, Baluchistan, a region known for its male-dominated social and political landscape. Under this project (YAD) conducted research to figure out the challenges for women and Hamida hazara was discussing this issue. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/lwK0cHbIS84?si=9HyWiZJAsvNU8AFa>

to prove themselves. One of the female politicians said women only come to the decision-making positions by accident (FNF,2020).

### **5.2.6 The Problems of Reserved Seats**

The effectiveness and number of reserved seats for women remained the topic of debate among the experts. One criticism of reserved seats is that few groups of political parties bring their families into the Assemblies through the reserved seats. Through the quota system, parties can get the experts and deserving women who cannot bear the enormous expenses of elections. However, as mentioned in Chapter Two, family members are being selected for the quota seats. Further, when the women came to the assemblies, they faced discrimination and criticism in the National Assembly. If women are not getting equal grounds to perform, then there is no point in reserving seats in Parliament. A few discriminatory points are mentioned below, which are faced by the women on reserve seats.

Women Parliamentarians have the highest attendance in the assembly; surprisingly, they face backlash and negative comments. One of the male MNAs expressed his view about the presence of women and said women do not have to go to the constituency or have nothing to do at home, so they get ready and come to the assembly. (Naseer&Kalsoom, 2019). Moreover, the reserved seats are considered charity, and women on those seats are the party supporters in the assembly, and they do what their party and male family members say.

It is claimed that women in reserved seats do not have equal opportunities in decision-making as the members on general seats have. Women assert that because they do not have their own (geographical) constituency and do not bear the costs or exert the effort of public campaigning, they are often overlooked by their political parties and during assembly procedures (Khan & Naqvi, 2020). Ms. Rakhshanda Naz stated that Because they lack a constituency, women elected to reserved seats are viewed as inferior to those elected to regular seats. Besides this, a reserved seat member showed grievance that the speaker gave more time to the general seats than members on reserved seats.

Moreover, women also face problems regarding funds. According to Zubaida Jalal, development funds are frequently not given to female lawmakers, particularly those occupying reserved seats. Instead, money is transferred to their male counterparts who hold more significant positions in the political system. This makes it impossible for female lawmakers to stand alone and build trust with the constituents they serve.

### **5.2.7. Lack of Training and Capacity Building**

Every field requires professional training and capacity-building programs. However, Parliamentarians do not get institutional mentorship. The National Assembly procedure is quite complicated to understand. Aisha Gaus Pasha also mentioned that when women are elected to assemblies for the first time, they lack knowledge and skills, which hinders them from performing efficiently, and they become the tools for completing quorums. Although PIPS conducted some training, Parliamentarians have divided views on this.

### **5.2.8. Lack of Women Representation in Key Decision-Making Positions.**

Women do not get enough representation in leadership roles like in ministries or standing committees. It is important to give these key positions to females so that their visibility inspires other women. There are almost thirty-three ministry portfolios in the federal, but women never get even one-third of all ministries. Similarly, thirty-eight of the standing committees of the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly have a female chairperson, but only six of them have a female chairperson. Shagufta Malik, a politician from KPK, raised the issue that there is often only one or two women included in the formation of committees, claiming that this constitutes representation for women. It can be seen in the standing committee of the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly that not a single woman was included in three committees, while in twelve committees, only one or two women were included.

### **5.2.9. Barriers Inside Parliament Business**

Mohammad Sohail (2019) mentioned some challenges highlighted by the survey respondents in his research that Sixty-four percent (64%) of the respondents pointed the discouraging behaviour, lack of women in leadership positions, gender insensitive environment and lack of work recognition as the significant challenges inside the business of the Parliament. Twenty-eight percent (28%) disclosed that religious parties' intolerance towards women lawmakers, low representation, and women members' absence of participation in assembly sessions are significant challenges for women Parliamentarians inside the business of the Parliament. Women's lack of knowledge and inexperience were mentioned by eight percent as significant challenges to women in the business of the Parliament. Shagufta Malik also mentioned the issue of the male members' lack of recognition of work. She said male members often ignore if women give valuable insight. Instead, they give credit to their male colleagues. In another research, women members highlight that the speaker does not give equal time to speak in the assembly. The speaker gives the men time in the morning when assembly business is at its peak

and vice versa for women. During the debates, Women members often complained about not getting time to speak (see Chapter 2).

### **5.3. Recommendations for the Future to Improve Inclusivity of Women**

Reasons have been mentioned which creates hurdles for women to improve their performance and for the better representation of women

- Leadership quotas can be introduced to involve women in leadership and decision-making roles. Upon asking, Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar also recommended that women give their portfolios to build their confidence, and women need to showcase their abilities. Secondly, women should be ensured equal representation in all committees to work in all areas, including foreign affairs, finance, science, etc. Pakistan can take Rwanda as an example because their constitution gave a thirty percent mandate to women for decision-making positions (Magazine, 2022).
- The Parliament must conduct institutional training for new lawmakers to understand assembly business better. Mentorship programs, in which experienced women teach the new lawmakers about legislation and business participation, can also be beneficial.
- FIA should take action against all channels that generate fake videos and photos. Secondly, anti-harassment laws and gender-sensitive policies should be strictly implemented.
- Media experts prove that media plays a massive impact in building narrative. They should use it to run campaigns to break gender stereotype barriers in politics and promote a positive narrative towards women in leadership. Promote the success stories of female politicians and train journalists to cover female politicians fairly. An example of the media role is in Finland, one of the countries with the highest representation. The eye-catching photograph of a smiling female Premier went viral, which positively impacted the inclusiveness of gender in politics and gender equality (Kudel, 2021).
- In this regard, religious leaders can play an effective role by encouraging women's leadership because, in Pakistan's history, we saw religious decrees against women's leadership, which affected a large section of society.
- In our layman's society, when someone talks about the rights of women. It is widely considered as “man vs. woman” instead of “man and woman.” While advocating and promoting women's political rights, one must ensure the inclusiveness of both genders. Encourage male members to promote their female colleagues, as the females run campaigns for their male members.
- ECP should take strict action against political parties that do not meet the quota set by the Elections Act 2017.

- A systemic equal allocation of resources should be ensured for all Parliamentarians, as some of them complain about it.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study seeks to thoroughly examine the role of women in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan, focusing on their contributions and influence during the five-year term. It aims to analyze how female members participated in legislative processes, policymaking, and representation of women's issues. Additionally, the research explores the challenges faced by women in the assembly. It assesses the impact of their involvement on gender equality and social progress within the broader political landscape of Pakistan. Through a comprehensive evaluation of their achievements and obstacles, this study clarifies the significance of women's roles in shaping the legislative agenda and contributing to the democratic process.

In each chapter, the researcher tried to achieve one of the following objectives: (1) To understand the evolution of women in Pakistan's Parliamentary politics. (2) To analyze and assess the women's role as parliamentarians in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan (2018-2023). (3) To analyze the bills, objectives, nature, and scope presented by female members in the National Assembly of Pakistan. (4) To examine challenges faced by the women parliamentarians during the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly and how they can cope with such challenges.

In chapter one an introduction, literature review, objectives and research questions are discussed. In chapter two, the researcher concluded that the quest for women's representation in Parliament started in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Till the making of Pakistan, women made their place in the Constituent Assembly. Unfortunately, still, women only make up about 20% of Pakistan's legislatures, which is after the establishment of a significant quota system. According to Pakistani women's political history, women have never been able to obtain equal representation in the political institutions of the state until the government has made provisions for them through global agreements, quotas, and reforms to legislation. Women have remained subordinate due to cultural norms and typical institutional structures. Women's participation in political affairs remained uncertain after independence. Begum Shaista Suhrawardy and Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz, two women, were able to gain access to the First Constituent Assembly on general seats even though there were no designated seats for them in the First or Second Constituent Assembly. For a decade and a half, nothing was done on the political, democratic, or constitutional fronts to encourage women to participate in politics. Women's seat reservations in national and provincial assemblies were included in all three of the 1956, 1962, and 1973 constitutions. Only three to ten percent of the total seats were reserved. It is evident from the historical discussion that seat reservations have played a significant role in

improving women's representation over time. The 1973 Constitution set aside ten seats for women for a period of ten years or three elections. The Revival of Constitution Order, which was enacted in 1985, raised the number of reserved seats in the National Assembly while increasing the number of members in the provincial assemblies by 5%. After three elections, the reserved seat provision in the constitution ended. Only two women were elected to general seats in the 1990 elections, indicating that women's participation was merely nominal. The same thing happened in the subsequent elections in 1993 and 1997, when just four and six women won, respectively.

Although few existed before 2002, female leaders played a key role in Pakistani politics and made substantial inroads into the corridors of power. Benazir Bhutto, the former prime minister, came to represent women's political emancipation in Pakistan. The situation demonstrates that the PPP gave women more significant political influence than any other party. Benazir Bhutto, the head of the PPP, was twice elected prime minister and nominated women for crucial political posts such as speaker, deputy speaker, and key ministries before other parties. It is interesting to note that the number of female lawmakers in Pakistan's National Assembly increased dramatically in the 2002 elections due to constitutional amendments. In 1997, it had six members; by 2002, that number had risen to 73. Although there was a minor decline in the number of female lawmakers between 2013 and 2018, this was nonetheless justified by the historical advantages of women in Pakistan's national house.

In chapters three and four, the researcher concluded that to comprehend, discuss, and address problems of public concern, female lawmakers elected to Pakistan's 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly have sought and incorporated information, investigations, and analysis from legislative and civil society organizations. The constructive consequences of this increased profile were also evident when problems concerning women often appeared in legislative forums. Women now have more Parliamentary representation, which allows them to have a say in how laws are made. Female MNAs represented several ministries for five years, allowing them to demonstrate their skills. Women's active engagement as Parliamentary secretaries during question-answering and other National Assembly business is evident from the analysis of discussions in the National Assembly. In addition to being represented in the National Assembly, women participated in its operations. They raised issues of order and resolution, called attention to notifications, and actively engaged in the Q&A sessions. Over the course of the five-year term, around 85% of all female lawmakers took part.

Women actively participated in assembly activity during the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly and significantly impacted legislative improvements, which was a significant step toward gender equality and the genuine meaning of democracy. In addition to being outspoken, they also

introduced legislation to solve societal problems. This study emphasizes the significant influence that female lawmakers played in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly on human rights and women's concerns. Female lawmakers have contributed sufficiently to gender-sensitive topics in the lower chamber of Parliament. The results show that female lawmakers have proven to be particularly progressive members of the House because of their respective contributions to legislative interventions (such as questions, calling attention notices, bills, and resolutions) addressing women's problems. Female lawmakers participate in the legislative activities of the House at a higher rate than their male colleagues. Women members of Parliament have proven themselves able to bring about change and influence policy and significant change through their active contribution to the formulation, input, and lobbying for legislation.

To shield women from harmful societal norms and legislation that victimize them, they proposed several bills and laws. Domestic Violence Act 2020, Zainab Alert Act, Response and Recovery Act, 2020, National Commission on the Status of Women (Amendment) Act 2021, Islamabad Capital Territory Domestic Worker Act 2022, and Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2020 are among the laws that were introduced during this time to benefit women. Research indicates that female lawmakers tend to show a heightened sensitivity to critical social issues, often prioritizing them in their legislative efforts. They actively seek to address these challenges through various possibilities, including formulating laws, introducing resolutions, and engaging in questions and answers. This highlights their commitment to social equity and justice and reflects a broader understanding of the complexities surrounding these issues, allowing them to advocate for policies that resonate with the needs of diverse communities. Female legislators contribute significantly to a more inclusive and responsive political landscape by prioritizing these topics.

Women legislators had extended a helping hand to the bills concerning all the burning social issues at that time, with a special focus on matters specific to marginalized segments. Representation of females in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan testified to the increasing role of women in political decision-making amid the fact that women are still struggling to get their voices heard in the male-dominated political culture. Women legislators were loud, pushed legislation, and greatly influenced Parliamentary politics. Allowing an equal and inclusive working space would allow women to make historic contributions to Pakistan's political, social, and economic conditions.

Women participating in Parliament also face challenges, which is figured out in chapter five. Women encounter various barriers to political participation, such as traditional gender roles, personal beliefs, gender discrimination, and prejudice. Other significant obstacles include a lack of education, socio-economic and political backgrounds, socialization in a male-

dominated political system, patriarchy, and internal challenges within the home. Tribal and feudal cultures' patriarchal family structures and the male head of the household's authority prevent women from freely appearing and working in public settings outside the home. Because of this, women cannot compete for dominance in the public and political spheres or join this exclusive group without the support of a male patriarch.

So, Women's representation in Parliamentary politics is not only a measure of progress on democratization but also a measure of progress on gender equality and development more broadly. This research investigates the challenges and impact of women MNAs on the effectiveness and promise of lawmaking as shadows of Pakistan's political and legislative history. Women have participated significantly in its legislative politics. Significantly, the provision of reserved seats and gender quotas for women has served to bring women into Parliament. The role of women legislators in the legislative of the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan is highly positive, which helps to know their interests, goals, and commitment to solving burning socio-political problems.

Over the course of these five years, female lawmakers maintained their excellent performance and legislative assertiveness. Since enacting laws is one of a legislature's primary responsibilities, female lawmakers were actively involved in introducing private member's bills both individually and together. In a nutshell, female lawmakers have demonstrated a great deal of zeal during discussions on matters pertaining to women, and their noteworthy performance in the house's legislative business demonstrates their increased engagement and dedication.

## REFERENCES

### PRIMARY SOURCES

- About Us - Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians.* (2020, November 6). Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians. <https://pppp.org.pk/website/about-us/>
- Elections Commission of Pakistan. (2017). *Elections Act, 2017. Updated Elections Act 2017-231011-105435.pdf*
- Government of Pakistan, *The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973.*
- Government of Pakistan. (2020). *The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2020. National Assembly of Pakistan*
- Government of Pakistan. (2020). *The Zainab Alert Act, Response and Recovery Act, 2020 (ACT XV 2020)*, Islamabad: National Assembly of Pakistan.
- Government of Pakistan. (2020). *Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act, 2021.*
- Government of Pakistan. (2020). *The Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2020.*
- Government of Pakistan. (2021). *National Commission on the Status of Women (Amendment) Act 2021 (Act No. XIX of 2021)*, Islamabad: National Assembly of Pakistan.
- Government of Pakistan. (2022). *The Islamabad Capital Territory Domestic Worker Act, 2022 (Act No XXC of 2022).*
- Government of Pakistan. Federal cabinet since 1947. Retrieved From [Cabinet Division](#) (accessed on July 15, 2024).
- Iftikhar, N. (2025, January 20). Interview by U. Raqia.
- Inter-Parliamentary Politics. (2023). Women in Politics: 2023. Retrieved July 23, 2024, from Inter-Parliamentary Union website: <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/infographics/2023-03/women-in-politics-2023>
- Inter-Parliamentary Union, [Inter-Parliamentary Union | For democracy. For everyone. \(ipu.org\)](#)
- MoDP. (2021). Year Book 2018-2021. In *Modp.gov.pk*. Ministry of Defence Production, Government of Pakistan. Retrieved from <https://modp.gov.pk/Publications>
- National Assembly of Pakistan, National Assembly Debates (05 June 1965).
- National Assembly of Pakistan, National Assembly Debates (18 July 2021).
- National Assembly of Pakistan, National Assembly Debates (19 June 1964).
- National Assembly of Pakistan. (2023). *Performance Report of the 15th National Assembly of Pakistan*. Islamabad: National Assembly of Pakistan. Retrieved from National Assembly of Pakistan website: <https://na.gov.pk/>

National Assembly of Pakistan. Constituent Assembly Debates (21 September 1954). VOL. 01.  
Karachi: Government of Pakistan Press. Retrieved from [National Assembly of Pakistan](#)

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates ( 18 September 2018).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates ( 21 June 1962). VOL.01.  
Rawalpindi: Government of Pakistan Press. Retrieved from [National Assembly of Pakistan](#)

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (03 August 2022).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (04 May 1977).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (05 November 2018).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (06 April 2023).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (06 January 2020).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (06 March 2021).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (10 June 1977).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (10 May 2022).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (13 May 1977).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (15 November 2019).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (15 September 2020).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (24 May 2021).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (25 September 2018).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (27 June 1977).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (27 March 2023).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (27 October 2018).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (29 October 2018). Retrieved from  
National Assembly of Pakistan website: <https://na.gov.pk/>

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates (30 October 2018).

National Assembly of Pakistan. National Assembly Debates. Retrieved from [National Assembly of Pakistan](#)

National Assembly of Pakistan. Standing Committee of 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, Retrieved  
from [National Assembly of Pakistan](#).

National Assembly of Pakistan. Standing Committee of 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, Retrieved  
from [National Assembly of Pakistan](#).

Senate of Pakistan, *Report of the Senate Functional Committee on Human Rights on The Zainab Alert Act, Response and Recovery Act (Amendment), 2020*. retrieved from  
[www.senate.gov.pk](http://www.senate.gov.pk)

*The Glorious Revolution*, Parliament, House of Commons (2010).

UN News. (2021, March 5). Proportion Of Women Parliamentarians Worldwide Reaches “All-Time High.” *UN News*. Retrieved from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/03/1086582>

UN News. (2024). Women In Parliament: Slow Progress Towards Equal Representation.

UN Women. (2023). *National Report On The Status Of Women In Pakistan, 2023 - A Summary*. UN Women. Retrieved from UN Women website: [https://pakistan.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/summary\\_-\\_nrsw-inl\\_final.pdf](https://pakistan.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/summary_-_nrsw-inl_final.pdf)

UNDP. (2021). Ministry of Human Rights and UNDP launch Pakistan’s first National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP). Retrieved January 10, 2025, from UNDP website: <https://www.undp.org/pakistan/press-releases/ministry-human-rights-and-undp-launch-pakistans-first-national-action-plan-business-and-human-rights-nap>

## **AUTOBIOGRAPHIES**

Hussain, Syeda Abida. (2015). *Power Failure: The Political Odyssey of a Pakistani Woman*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Ikramullah, Shaista S.(1963). *From Purdah to Parliament*. London: The Cresset Press.

Shahnawaz, Jahan Ara (1971). *Father and Daughter: A Political Autobiography*. Lahore: Nigarishat.

## **REPORTS**

Druciarek, M. (2020). *Women in Parliament: 1995-2020*. Inter-Parliamentary Union.

FAFEN. (2014a). *Women MPs Performance in the National Assembly Report*. Islamabad: Free and Fair Election Network. Retrieved from Free and Fair Election Network website: <https://fafen.org/fafen-women-mps-performance-in-the-national-assembly-report/>

FAFEN. (2014b, April 30). Five Years Performance of 13th National Assembly of Pakistan March 2008-March 2013. Retrieved June 7, 2024, from Free and Fair Election Network website: <https://fafen.org/five-years-performance-13th-national-assembly-pakistan-march-2008-march-2013/>

FAFEN. (2018a). *A Tribute to Women Legislators 2017-18*. Free and Fair Election Network. Retrieved from Free and Fair Election Network website: <https://www.fafen.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/FAFEN-Women-Legislators-Performance-Report-2017-18.pdf>

- FAFEN. (2018b, August 16). 15th National Assembly of Pakistan 2018-2023. Retrieved from Free and Fair Election Network website: <https://fafen.org/15th-national-assembly-profile/>
- FAFEN. (2019). *Women Parliamentarians Performance 2018-19*. Free and Fair Elections Network. Retrieved from Free and Fair Elections Network website: <https://fafen.org/>
- FAFEN. (2020). Women Parliamentarians Performance 2019-20. In <https://fafen.org>. Free and Fair Election Network.
- FAFEN. (2021). Women Parliamentarians Performance 2020-2021. In <https://fafen.org>. Free and Fair Election Network.
- FAFEN. (2022). Women Parliamentarians Performance 2021-2022. In <https://fafen.org>. Free and Fair Election Network.
- FAFEN. (2023). Women Parliamentarians Performance 2022-2023. In <https://fafen.org>. Free and Fair Election Network.
- Friedrich Naumann Foundation (2020). *Women Legislators Political Participation in Pakistan 2018-20*. Lahore: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.
- Mirza,N& Wagha, W.(2009). *Performance Of Women Parliamentarians In The 12th National Assembly: A Five Year Report*. Aurat Foundation.
- Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT). (2004). *Women Representation in Pakistan's Parliament*.
- Pal, K. K., Piaget, K., & Zahidi, S. (2024, June 11). *Global Gender Gap Report 2024*. Retrieved from World Economic Forum website.
- PILDAT. (2023). Five-year Performance of 15th National Assembly of Pakistan (August 13, 2018- August 09, 2023). In *Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency*. PILDAT. Retrieved from PILDAT website: [www.pildat.org](http://www.pildat.org)
- PIPS. (2024). *How Parliament Works* (4th ed.). Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services. Retrieved from [www.pips.gov.pk](http://www.pips.gov.pk)
- Women Parliamentary Caucus – Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC). (n.d.). Retrieved from Wpc.org.pk website: <https://wpc.org.pk/>
- Women Parliamentary Caucus (2019). *Challenges and Impediments against Women in Politics (A Seminar of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians- Women's Parliamentary Caucus at 5<sup>th</sup> CPA Asia Regional Conference)*. Retrieved from [www.wpc.org.pk](http://www.wpc.org.pk)

## SECONDARY SOURCES

### BOOKS, ARTICLES & DISSERTATIONS

- Afzal, Nabeela. (1999). *Women and Parliament in Pakistan 1947-1977*. Lahore: Pakistan Study Centre, University of the Punjab, Quaid-i-Azam Campus Lahore.
- Awan, S. Z. (2023). Women's Political Participation in the Socio-Cultural Environment Of Pakistan: A Critical Review of Mainstream Political Parties (2018-2022). *Simulacra*, 6(2), 277-292.
- Azhar, M. M., Khan, A. B., & Waris, M. (2018). Political Marginalization of Women in Pakistan: Issues and Challenges. *Global Regional Review*, 3(1), 428-444.
- Azhar, M. M., Khan, A. B., & Waris, M. (2018). Political Marginalization of Women in Pakistan: Issues and Challenges. *Global Regional Review*, III(I), 428-444. [https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2018\(iii-i\).32](https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2018(iii-i).32)
- Ballington, J., & Karam, A. (2005). *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*. Sweden: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.
- Banerjee, A. C. (Ed.). (1946). *Indian Constitutional Documents* (Vol. 2). Mukherjee & Company.
- Banerjee, A.C. (1961). *Indian Constitutional Documents 1757-1947*. Calcutta: A. Mukherjee & Co. P. LTD.
- Bano, S. (2009). Women in Parliament in Pakistan: Problems and Potential Solutions. *Women's Studies Journal*, 23(1), 19.
- Bari, F. (2010). Women Parliamentarians: Challenging The Frontiers Of Politics In Pakistan. *Gender, Technology and Development*, 14(3), 363-384.
- Bari, F., & Pal, M. S. (2000). *Country briefing paper: Women in Pakistan*. Asian Development Bank Programs Department and Office of Environment and Social Development.
- Begum, A. (2023). Political participation of female in Pakistan: Prospects and Challenges. *Unisia*, 41(1), 39-76.
- Chakravarty, S. (1954). *The Evolution of Representative Government in India, 1884-1909*. University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies (United Kingdom).
- Chandra, B., Mukherjee, M., Mukherjee, A., Panikkar, K. N., & Mahajan, S. (1989). *India's Struggle For Independence*. Penguin Books.
- Chughtai, A. (2018). Zainab's Murder: Heinous Crimes, Speedy Trial And The Challenge Of Procedural Rights. *Review of Human Rights*, 4(1), 11-29.

- Dutoya, V. (2013). From Women's Quota To "Women's Politics": The Impact Of Gender Quotas On Political Representations And Practices In The Pakistani National Parliament. *Femina Politica—Zeitschrift für feministische Politikwissenschaft*, 22(2), 7-8.
- Gul, S., & Farooq, M. (2019). Socio-Cultural Constraints to Women's Political Empowerment in Southern Punjab: Evidence from Multan District. *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, 40(2).
- Gul, S., & Sherazi, T. Z. (2022). Assessment Of Women Political Participation In 2018 Elections And Its Comparison With Elections Of 2002, 2008, and 2013. *Journal of Humanities, Social and Management Sciences*, 3(1), 71–83. <https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.jhmsms/3.1.6>
- Hussain, M. (2019). *The Parliament of Pakistan: A History Of Institution-Building And (Un) Democratic Practices, 1971-1977*. Oxford University Press.
- Ilbert, C. (1911). *Parliament: Its History, Constitution, and Practice*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 7-8.
- Jaiswal, A. (2018, January). The Evolution Of Women's Movement In Colonial India. In *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* (Vol. 79, pp. 577-582). Indian History Congress.
- Jones, C. (Ed.). (2009). *A Short History of Parliament*. UK: The Boydell Press.
- Karki, T. K. (2023). Women's Representation In Politics: An Analysis Of South Asian Countries. *Journal of Human Rights Law and Practice*, 6(2), 1-8p.
- Khan, A., & Naqvi, S. (2020). Dilemmas of Representation: Women in Pakistan's assemblies. *Asian Affairs*, 51(2), 286-306.
- Khan, Hamid (2017). *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Khera, P. N. (1941, January). History Of the Female Franchise In British India (Summary). In *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* (pp. 543-545). Indian History Congress.
- Khera, P. N. (1942). Civic Rights of Women In British India. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 4(1), 35-63.
- Kudel, S. (2021, May 26). *Feminist Finland: From Representation to Equality*. Green European Journal. <https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/feminist-finland-from-representation-to-equality/>

- Mukherji, P. (1915). *Indian Constitutional Documents(1773-1915)*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Company.
- Mumtaz, K., & Shaheed, F. (1987). Women of Pakistan: Two steps forward, one step back?.
- Nagra, S. U., Arshad, N., Riaz, S., & Ayub, M. (2024). Women in Pakistani Politics: A Study of Economic and Psychological Determinants. *Journal of Policy Research*, 10(2), 398–402. <https://doi.org/10.61506/02.00247>
- Naheed, K., Zaheer, N., Shah, M., & Durran, A.(2021). Women’s Participation In Politics And Decision-Making Process Of Pakistan: Challenges And Barriers. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, 9 (1),185-196.
- Naseer, S., & Kalsoom, R. (2019). Dearth of women political participation: A hurdle in the way of national integration in Pakistan. *Pakistan Vision*, 20(2), 205.
- Nawaz, Ghazala (2014). *The Role of Women Parliamentarians in Pakistani Politics (1970-1988)*. Doctoral dissertation, Quaid-e-Azam University
- Paxton, P., & Hughes, M. M. (2014). *Women, Politics, and Power: A Global Perspective*. California: Sage Publications, Inc., 9.
- Pincus, S. C., & Robinson, J. A. (2011). *What Happened During The Glorious Revolution?* (No. w17206). National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Pollard. A.F, (1926). *The Evolution of Parliament*. Longmans.
- Qureshi, A., & Ahmad, S. (2022, September). Reserved Seats For Women In Pakistan: Reinforcement Of Patriarchy And Powerlessness (2002–2018). In *Women's Studies International Forum* (Vol. 94, p. 102629). Pergamon.
- Qureshi, A., & Ahmad, S. (2022, September). Reserved seats for women in Pakistan:
- Rashiduzzaman, M. (1964). *The Central Legislature in British India: 1921 to 1947* (Doctoral dissertation, Durham University).
- Reinforcement Of Patriarchy And Powerlessness (2002–2018). In *Women's Studies International Forum* (Vol. 94), Pergamon.
- Richardson, H. G. (1928). *The Origins of Parliament*. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 11, 137-183.
- Richardson, H.G. (1928). The Origins of Parliament. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* , 1928, Vol. 11 (1928), pp. 137-183.
- Rubab, M., Mustafa, D. G., & Nawaz, A. (2020). Conundrum of women political participation in Pakistan: Impediments and Opportunities. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 4(2), 135-149.

Sharif, R., & Hina, G. I. (2018). Participation of women in Politics: A Perceptive of Hurdles and Challenges. *Journal Art and Social Sciences*, 1(5), 68-95.

Skottowe, B. C. (1887). *A Short History of Parliament*. New York: Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square.

Sohail, M. (2019). *Challenges To Women Parliamentarians In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa* (Q. Naseem, Ed.). Blueveins. Retrieved from <https://www.blueveins.org/assets/pdf/publications/Challenges%20to%20women%20parliamentarian.pdf>

Southard, B. (1993). Colonial Politics and Women's Rights: Woman Suffrage Campaigns In Bengal, British India In The 1920s. *Modern Asian Studies*, 27(2), 397-439.

Tadros, M. (Ed.). (2014). *Women in Politics: Gender, Power, and Development*. New York: Zed Books.

## **NEWSPAPER AND ELECTRONIC/ SOCIAL MEDIA**

AFP. (2024, December 3). *Deepfakes Weaponised to Target Pakistan's Women Leaders*. Retrieved January 26, 2025, from DAWN.COM website: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1876469>

Ahmed, Z. (2022, May 6). *FIA to Arrest Individuals Spreading Fake Videos*. Retrieved January 26, 2025, from ProPakistani website: <https://propakistani.pk/2022/05/06/fia-to-arrest-individuals-spreading-fake-videos/>

Ali, H. (2018, November 12). *Did PTI MNA Submit a Resolution to Recognize Israel? The Real Story Behind Fake News*. Daily Pakistan English News. <https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/12-Nov-2018/did-pti-mna-submit-a-resolution-to-recognize-israel-the-real-story-behind-fake-news>

Alvi, M. (2023, July 13). *PTI Prefers not to Issue Statement on Israeli Envoy's Remarks*. Thenews.com.pk; The News International. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1090008-pti-prefers-not-to-issue-statement-on-israeli-envoy-s-remarks>

Anis, M. (2019, January 15). *NA Opposition Protests Over Bill Introduction*. Thenews.com.pk; The News International. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/419733-na-opposition-protests-over-bill-introduction>

APP. (2023, April 11). *Call For More Leadership Roles for Women*. The Express Tribune. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2411235/call-for-more-leadership-roles-for-women-1>

- Azam, M. (2021, December 14). *Unprecedented in Parliament's History: Women Lawmakers Present 133 Bills in 4-Year*. APP. <https://www.app.com.pk/national/women-lawmakers-present-133bills-in-4-year/>
- Bangash, F. (2018, June 11). *Reserved Seats For Women: New Faces Dominate PTI List, PPP Prefers Loyalists*. Thenews.com.pk; The News International. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/328808-reserved-seats-for-women-new-faces-dominate-pti-list-ppp-prefers-loyalists>
- Dawn. (2018, October 17). *Justice For Zainab: Timeline Of The Kasur Rape, Murder Case That Grippd The Nation*. Retrieved from DAWN.COM website: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1439587>
- Dawn. (2020, September 21). *Opposition Parties Form Alliance To Oust Govt*. Retrieved from DAWN.COM website: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1580803>
- ECP De Notifies 43 PTI Mnas In One Fell Swoop*. (2023, January 25). The Express Tribune; The Express Tribune. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2397642/ecp-de-notifies-43-pti-mnas-in-one-fell-swoop>
- Fahmida For Mps To Collectively Pull Country Out Of Crises*. (2022, June 24). The Express Tribune. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2363092/fahmida-for-mps-to-collectively-pull-country-out-of-crises>
- Farooq, A. (2022, April 16). *NA Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri Resigns Before No-Trust Vote*. ARY NEWS. <https://arynews.tv/na-deputy-speaker-qasim-suri-resigns-before-no-trust-vote/>
- Geo News (2021, December 31). *PPP's Shagufta Jumani Breaks Silence Over National Assembly Incident*. Wwww.geo.tv; Geo News. <https://www.geo.tv/latest/390799-ppps-shagufta-jumani-breaks-silence-over-national-assembly-incident>
- Ghilzai, R. (2019, April 26). *Govt Admits To Ousting Health Minister Over Poor Show*. The Express Tribune. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1960343/govt-admits-ousting-health-minister-poor-show>
- Gilani, M. (2025, January 23). *Pakistan Chief Minister Targeted By AI "Hug" Video*. Retrieved January 26, 2025, from Fact Check website: <https://factcheck.afp.com/doc.afp.com.36TP83J>
- Gul, Z. (2022, March 16). *Zartaj Gul Wazir (PTI MNA) | Open & Honest Documentary Interview | Slightly Political | Neemopani*. Retrieved January 26, 2025, from YouTube website: <https://youtu.be/Vqz4lBOTkfw?si=mkPR45WTnonhh6t->
- Guramani, N. (2022, January 3). *Missing Persons Bill Has Gone "Missing," Says Shireen Mazari*. DAWN.COM. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1667443>

- Gurmani, N. (2021, December 24). *More Than 14,000 Rape Cases Reported Over Last Four Years, NA Told*. DAWN.COM. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1665575>
- Hassan, M. (2018, June 20). *Fortune Smiles On Rich Ladies, Workers Also Not Ignored*. The Nation. <https://www.nation.com.pk/21-Jun-2018/fortune-smiles-on-rich-ladies-workers-also-not-ignored>
- Here is The List Of PTI Mnas De-Seated So Far*. (2023, January 20). Thenews.com.pk; The News International. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/1032483-which-35-pti-mnas-have-been-deseated-by-the-na-speaker>
- Magazine, D. (2022, June 5). *Rwanda has the Highest Representation of Women in Parliament in the World. What factors have led to this feat?* Diplomat Magazine. <https://diplomatmagazine.eu/2022/06/05/rwanda-has-the-highest-representation-of-women-in-parliament-in-the-world-what-factors-have-led-to-this-feat/>
- Maid's Torture: NA Panel Wants Action Against Judge*. (2023, August 4). Thenews.com.pk; The News International. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1097105-maid-s-torture-na-panel-wants-action-against-judge>
- Malik, T., & Ghauri, I. (2018, July 12). *How Reserved Seats For Women Are Reserved For Privileged*. The Express Tribune. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1755698/reserved-seats-women-reserved-privileged>
- Pakistan Firmly Believes In Women Empowerment, Gender Equality: Dr. Shireen Mazari*. (2021, March 24). Www.radio.gov.pk. <https://www.radio.gov.pk/24-03-2021/pakistan-firmly-believes-in-women-empowerment-gender-equality-dr-shireen-mazari>
- Riaz, R. (2018, February 27). *Shahbaz Sharif, named president of PML-N, brother Nawaz, becomes "Leader for Life."* Arab News; Arabnews. <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1255591/world>
- Sirajul Haq Condemns PTI MNA for Proposing to Recognize Israel*. - free Online library. (2018). Thefreelibrary.com. <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Sirajul+Haq+condemns+PTI+MNA+for+proposin+g+to+recognize+Israel.-a0561968693>
- The Black Hole. (2024, September 3). *Women's Political Representation in the Pakistani Parliament: Issues, Challenges and Solutions*. Retrieved January 26, 2025, from YouTube website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuC5EdXAInI>
- The Dawn (2023, May 4). *NA Pledges To Ensure Right To Free Speech*. DAWN.COM. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1750821>
- Wasim, A. (2018, June 14). *For PML-N, only family seems to matter*. DAWN.COM. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1414042/for-pml-n-only-family-seems-to-matter>

Women's Participation in Politics & Democracy in Pakistan. (Documentary). (2022). Kohar Web Tv. <https://youtu.be/lwK0cHbIS84?si=l8hM3IWuh5XjbO4S>

Zafar, F., & Sami, A. (2021). *Women's Participation in Politics in Pakistan*. Graduate Institute of Development Studies Lahore School of Economics. Retrieved from Graduate Institute of Development Studies Lahore School of Economics website: <https://gids.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Working-Paper-06-21-reviewed-by-FZ-Complete.pdf>

**ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THESIS**

---

Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians	PPPP
Pakistan Muslim League- Nawaz	PLM-N
<i>Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf</i>	PTI
Inter-Parliamentary Union	IPU
United Nations	UN
Constituent Assembly of Pakistan	CAP
Constituent Assembly debates	CAD
National Assembly Debates	NAD
Asian Development Bank	ADB
Free and Fair Election Network	FAFEN
Grand Democratic Alliance	GDA
Pakistan Democratic Alliance	PDM
Election Commission of Pakistan	ECP
Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency	PILDAT
Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services	PIPS
Member of National Assembly	MNA
Member of Provincial Assembly	MPA
Ministry of Defence Production	MoDP
Women Parliamentary Caucus	WPC
Mutahidda Majlis Amal Pakistan	MMAP
Grand Democratic Alliance	GDA
Domestic Violence	DV

---

**TURNITIN ORIGINAL REPORT**

Role of Women in the Parliamentary Politics of Pakistan: A  
Case Study of the 15th National Assembly of Pakistan

ORIGINALITY REPORT

**13%**

SIMILARITY INDEX

**9%**

INTERNET SOURCES

**7%**

PUBLICATIONS

**5%**

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

<b>1</b>	<b>Submitted to Higher Education Commission Pakistan</b> Student Paper	<b>3%</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>prr.hec.gov.pk</b> Internet Source	<b>1%</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>"Women in Governing Institutions in South Asia", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2018</b> Publication	<b>1%</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>na.gov.pk</b> Internet Source	<b>1%</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>www.sfcg.org</b> Internet Source	<b>1%</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>docslib.org</b> Internet Source	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Zia, Ameena Mohyuddin. "Descriptive to Substantive Representation: A Study of Gender Quotas in the National Assembly of</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>

Pakistan, 2002-2018.", University of Missouri -  
Saint Louis, 2019

Publication

---

8	Drude Dahlerup. "Women, Quotas and Politics", Routledge, 2019 Publication	<1 %
9	Abeeda Qureshi, Sara Ahmad. "Reserved seats for women in Pakistan: Reinforcement of patriarchy and powerlessness (2002-2018)", Women's Studies International Forum, 2022 Publication	<1 %
10	fospah.gov.pk Internet Source	<1 %
11	pakistan.unwomen.org Internet Source	<1 %
12	"The Asian Yearbook of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law", Brill, 2022 Publication	<1 %
13	www.ilo.org Internet Source	<1 %
14	dailytimes.com.pk Internet Source	<1 %
15	boell.org Internet Source	<1 %

---

16	Devin K. Joshi, Christian Echle. "Substantive Representation of Women in Asian Parliaments", Routledge, 2022 Publication	<1 %
17	thefrontierpost.com Internet Source	<1 %
18	Anne Marie Goetz. "Governing Women - Women's Political Effectiveness in Contexts of Democratization and Governance Reform", Routledge, 2009 Publication	<1 %
19	Funmi Olonisakin, Karen Barnes, Eka Ikpe. "Women, Peace and Security - Translating Policy into Practice", Routledge, 2019 Publication	<1 %
20	Keerty Nakray. "Gender-based Violence and Public Health - International perspectives on budgets and policies", Routledge, 2013 Publication	<1 %
21	Rahim, Tariq. "Political Parties and Democratic Development in Pakistan: Military Regimes and Democratic Transformative Struggle", Middle East Technical University (Turkey), 2024 Publication	<1 %
22	archive.org Internet Source	<1 %

23	<a href="http://www.un.org.pk">www.un.org.pk</a> Internet Source	<1 %
24	Submitted to Indiana University Student Paper	<1 %
25	Political Handbook of the World 1998, 1980. Publication	<1 %
26	Maryam S. Khan. "Written Out of History: Collective Reflection with Oral History Narrators on Pakistan's Women Constitution-Makers", Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 2025 Publication	<1 %
27	<a href="http://en.wikipedia.org">en.wikipedia.org</a> Internet Source	<1 %
28	Kelly Dawn Askin, Dorean Koenig. "Women and International Human Rights Law", Brill, 2000 Publication	<1 %
29	<a href="http://www.refworld.org">www.refworld.org</a> Internet Source	<1 %
30	Shaheen S. Ali. "Gender and Human Rights in Islam and International Law", Brill, 2000 Publication	<1 %
31	<a href="http://www.geo.tv">www.geo.tv</a> Internet Source	<1 %

32	Ashutosh Misra. "Rise of religious parties in Pakistan: Causes and prospects", Strategic Analysis, 2003 Publication	<1 %
33	<a href="http://www.eff.org">www.eff.org</a> Internet Source	<1 %
34	Chakravarty, S.. "The Evolution of Representative Government in India, 1884-1909.", University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies (United Kingdom), 2019 Publication	<1 %
35	Subrata K. Mitra, Siegfried O. Wolf, Jivanta Schöttli. "A Political and Economic Dictionary of South Asia", Routledge, 2015 Publication	<1 %
36	Submitted to National Law University New Delhi Student Paper	<1 %
37	<a href="http://english.jagran.com">english.jagran.com</a> Internet Source	<1 %
38	<a href="http://projects.undemocracymfund.org">projects.undemocracymfund.org</a> Internet Source	<1 %
39	<a href="http://thefrontiermanipur.com">thefrontiermanipur.com</a> Internet Source	<1 %

40	Cristina Szanton Blanc. "Urban Children in Distress - Global Predicaments and Innovative Strategies", Routledge, 2020 Publication	<1 %
41	Submitted to Manchester Metropolitan University Student Paper	<1 %
42	<a href="http://www.coursehero.com">www.coursehero.com</a> Internet Source	<1 %
43	<a href="http://www.ungpreporting.org">www.ungpreporting.org</a> Internet Source	<1 %
44	Qaisar Abbas, Farooq Sulehria. "From Terrorism to Television - Dynamics of Media, State, and Society in Pakistan", Routledge, 2020 Publication	<1 %
45	<a href="http://guides.lib.umich.edu">guides.lib.umich.edu</a> Internet Source	<1 %
46	<a href="http://ndemo.arabnews.com">ndemo.arabnews.com</a> Internet Source	<1 %
47	<a href="http://ia601408.us.archive.org">ia601408.us.archive.org</a> Internet Source	<1 %
48	<a href="http://wikimili.com">wikimili.com</a> Internet Source	<1 %

49	R. K. Tiwari. "Political Parties, Party Manifestos and Elections in India, 1909-2014", Routledge, 2018 Publication	<1 %
50	Robert C. Oberst, Yogendra K. Malik, Charles H. Kennedy, Ashok Kapur, Mahendra Lawoti, Syedur Rahman, Ahrar Ahmad. "Government Politics South Asia", Routledge, 2018 Publication	<1 %
51	Submitted to Sardar Vallabhbhai National Inst. of Tech.Surat Student Paper	<1 %
52	sdpi.org Internet Source	<1 %
53	Submitted to Aberystwyth University Student Paper	<1 %
54	Abid, Maryam. "Jamaat-e-Islami's Influence on the Muslim Identity of Pakistanis Through Legislative Amendments and Their Social Consequences.", University of Kansas, 2023 Publication	<1 %
55	Submitted to Georgia Virtual School Student Paper	<1 %
56	Submitted to Intercollege Student Paper	<1 %
57	archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de	

	Internet Source	<1 %
58	<a href="http://oro.open.ac.uk">oro.open.ac.uk</a> Internet Source	<1 %
59	<a href="http://www.thenews.com.pk">www.thenews.com.pk</a> Internet Source	<1 %
60	Khan, Shabbir Ahmad. "Judicial Independence in Pakistan: A Case Study of Lawyers' Movement, 2007-2009", West Virginia University, 2022 Publication	<1 %
61	Submitted to National University of Public Service - Institute for Research and Development on State and Governance Student Paper	<1 %
62	<a href="http://pulsepakistan.com">pulsepakistan.com</a> Internet Source	<1 %
63	<a href="http://www.nation.com.pk">www.nation.com.pk</a> Internet Source	<1 %
64	Daluwatte, Rashini Shashikala. "(Re)Imagining "Tamilness" Within the Postcolonial Sri Lankan Neoliberal Nation State.", Washington State University, 2023 Publication	<1 %
65	K.R. Dikshit, Jutta Dikshit. "Land, People and Economy of Pakistan - A Geographic	<1 %

Perspective", Routledge, 2025

Publication

---

66	Sidra Akram, Mian Muhammad Azhar, Shakil Akhtar, Husni Mubarak, Muhmmad Ikram Ul Haq. "THE PARLIAMENTS OF CANADA AND PAKISTAN: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS AND WEAK", Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews, 2021 Publication	<1 %
67	go.gale.com Internet Source	<1 %
68	www.care.org Internet Source	<1 %
69	www.immigrazione.it Internet Source	<1 %
70	www.nytimes.com Internet Source	<1 %
71	Ayesha Khan, Sana Naqvi. "Dilemmas of Representation: Women in Pakistan's Assemblies", Asian Affairs, 2020 Publication	<1 %
72	Marinett, Matthew Thomas. "Corporate Responsibility and Accountability in Internet Content Governance.", University of Toronto (Canada), 2024 Publication	<1 %

---

73	<a href="https://simehbucket.s3.amazonaws.com">simehbucket.s3.amazonaws.com</a> Internet Source	<1 %
74	<a href="http://www.gulf-times.com">www.gulf-times.com</a> Internet Source	<1 %
75	Caroline Starkey, Emma Tomalin. "The Routledge Handbook of Religion, Gender and Society", Routledge, 2021 Publication	<1 %
76	Jernej Letnar Čerňič. "Corporate Accountability under Socio-Economic Rights", Routledge, 2018 Publication	<1 %
77	Margarita Barns. "India - Today and Tomorrow", Routledge, 2022 Publication	<1 %
78	<a href="http://digitalrightsmonitor.pk">digitalrightsmonitor.pk</a> Internet Source	<1 %
79	<a href="http://fastercapital.com">fastercapital.com</a> Internet Source	<1 %
80	<a href="http://old.agora-parl.org">old.agora-parl.org</a> Internet Source	<1 %
81	<a href="http://pakobserver.net">pakobserver.net</a> Internet Source	<1 %
82	<a href="http://www.nextedition.com.ng">www.nextedition.com.ng</a> Internet Source	<1 %

83	ywca.ps Internet Source	<1 %
84	Christine Hallett, Alan Prout. "Hearing the Voices of Children - Social Policy for a New Century", Routledge, 2019 Publication	<1 %
85	Fehér, Éva. "A Hallás Utáni (Meg)Értés Fejlesztése az 5-7 Éves Óvodások Körében Dramatikus Narratív Konvenció Használatával", University of Pács (Hungary), 2024 Publication	<1 %
86	Arthur Berriedale Keith. "A Constitutional History of India, 1600-1935", Routledge, 2017 Publication	<1 %

Exclude quotes Off  
Exclude bibliography Off

Exclude matches Off

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE REPORT

**Ume Raqia**

### **Role of Women in the Parliamentary Politics of Pakistan: A Case Study of the 15th National Assembly of Pakistan**

-  Quick Submit
-  Quick Submit
-  University of Gujrat

---

#### Document Details

Submission ID  
trn:oid::1:3147486170

Submission Date  
Feb 6, 2025, 11:22 AM GMT+5

Download Date  
Feb 6, 2025, 11:30 AM GMT+5

File Name  
Thesis\_for\_Plagiarism\_Ume\_Raqia.docx

File Size  
116.6 KB

64 Pages  
25,654 Words  
145,137 Characters

## \*% detected as AI

AI detection includes the possibility of false positives. Although some text in this submission is likely AI generated, scores below the 20% threshold are not surfaced because they have a higher likelihood of false positives.

### Caution: Review required.

It is essential to understand the limitations of AI detection before making decisions about a student's work. We encourage you to learn more about Turnitin's AI detection capabilities before using the tool.

### Disclaimer

Our AI writing assessment is designed to help educators identify text that might be prepared by a generative AI tool. Our AI writing assessment may not always be accurate (it may misidentify writing that is likely AI generated as AI generated and AI paraphrased or likely AI generated and AI paraphrased writing as only AI generated) so it should not be used as the sole basis for adverse actions against a student. It takes further scrutiny and human judgment in conjunction with an organization's application of its specific academic policies to determine whether any academic misconduct has occurred.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How should I interpret Turnitin's AI writing percentage and false positives?

The percentage shown in the AI writing report is the amount of qualifying text within the submission that Turnitin's AI writing detection model determines was either likely AI-generated text from a large-language model or likely AI-generated text that was likely revised using an AI-paraphrase tool or word spinner.

False positives (incorrectly flagging human-written text as AI-generated) are a possibility in AI models.

AI detection scores under 20%, which we do not surface in new reports, have a higher likelihood of false positives. To reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation, no score or highlights are attributed and are indicated with an asterisk in the report (\*%).

The AI writing percentage should not be the sole basis to determine whether misconduct has occurred. The reviewer/instructor should use the percentage as a means to start a formative conversation with their student and/or use it to examine the submitted assignment in accordance with their school's policies.

### What does 'qualifying text' mean?

Our model only processes qualifying text in the form of long-form writing. Long-form writing means individual sentences contained in paragraphs that make up a longer piece of written work, such as an essay, a dissertation, or an article, etc. Qualifying text that has been determined to be likely AI-generated will be highlighted in cyan in the submission, and likely AI-generated and then likely AI-paraphrased will be highlighted purple.

Non-qualifying text, such as bullet points, annotated bibliographies, etc., will not be processed and can create disparity between the submission highlights and the percentage shown.

