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An Analysis Of Women Empowerment In Pakistan With Reference To Musharraf's Regime

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Abstract

The term 'women empowerment' has now become an essential and debatable issue around the globe. In the development of a state role of women is considered as an important factor for socio-economic progress, and is essential for the growth and development of civilizations. This article studies the policies related to empower women in the ruling era of General Pervaiz Musharraf. The Islamization during Zia-ul-Haq's regime provided strength to the roots of gender discrimination and male dominance in the society by supporting misleading concepts of Islam about control and suppression of women. The governments of post-Zia period timely understood the importance and significance of female in the development of a nation and worked positively in this direction. The empowerment of women in Mushraf's era received enormous appreciation as he considered women empowerment as the most important factor for economically stable and progress of nation. In spite of, resistance from various social, religious and political sectors; the policies and amendments made during Musharraf's regime to empower women had the potential to produce effective results. Due to lack of support from societal and political individuals, the preceding governments failed to implement those policies; therefore the goal of providing education, health, justice and respect cannot be fulfilled. The study suggests that better mechanism is required to implement policies for the protection of women's rights so that they become more equally active member of the society and play their vital role in the development of the country.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Musharaf's Regime, Gender Equality.

تلخیص

خواتین خود مختاری بین الاقوامی سطح پر ایک لازمی بحث طلب مسئلہ ہے۔ کسی بھی ریاست کی نشوونما اور سماجی و معاشی ترقی میں جب تک عورتوں کے برابری کے حقوق تسلیم نہیں کئے جائیں گے ترقی کا عمل سست روی کا شکار رہے گا، زیر نظر مقالے میں پاکستان

میں جنرل پرویز مشرف کے دور حکومت میں عورتوں کی خود مختاری کے حصول کے حوالے سے بحث کی گئی ہے مشرف دور سے قبل جنرل ضیاء الحق نے معاشرے میں اسلام کا غلط استعمال کرتے ہوئے عورتوں کی صنفی برابری اور خود مختاری کی نفی کی گئی جس سے ترقی کے عمل میں رکاوٹ پیدا ہوئی بعد ازاں اس طرف مثبت رجحانات پیدا ہوئے اور مشرف کے دور حکمرانی میں عورتوں کو برابری کی بنیاد پر ایک اہم عامل کے طور پر لیا گیا جس کے معاشرے پر مثبت اثرات مرتب ہونے لگے۔ مختلف سیاسی، سماجی اور مذہبی حلقوں کی جانب سے مخالفت کے باوجود مشرف حکومت نے اس جانب توجہ مبذول کی تاہم بعد ازاں ان پالیسیوں کو عملی جامہ پہنانے میں دشواریاں پیش آئیں اور تعلیم کی کمی اور سماجی انصاف کی عدم فراہمی سے مشکلات درپیش رہیں زیر نظر مطالعے میں عورتوں کو برابری کی بنیاد پر ترقی کے اہم عوامل کو زیر بحث لایا گیا ہے اور عورتوں کے حقوق کی نگہداشت کے لیے کئی تجاویز پیش کی گئیں ہیں ان تجاویز کی روشنی میں عورتوں کو برابری کی بنیاد پر کام کرنے کے مواقع پیش کرنے سے معاشرے کی ترقی کی رفتار پر نمایاں تبدیلی مرتب ہو سکتی ہے اور پاکستان ترقی کی جانب رواں دواں ہو سکتا ہے۔

کلیدی الفاظ: خواتین کی خود مختاری، مشرف کا دور حکومت، صنفی مساوات

Introduction

By definition, empowerment is enhancing an individuals or groups' capability to decide and to transmute their choices into covet actions and outcomes (Afzal, Ali, Ahmad, Zafar, & Niazi, 2009). The phenomena 'women empowerment' has become an essential and debatable issue in the field of development. The concept of women empowerment can be explained as the amplification of a woman's ability to make deliberate life choices in a scenario where this ability was previously denied to her (Kabeer, 1999). Wide range of indicators and dimensions are used by the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index to explain women empowerment (Lopez-Claros & Zahidi, 2005). Any development roadmap which avoids the importance of enhancing the role of women cannot achieve desired socio-economic development. Thus, it is an undeniable fact that the importance of empowering women has been conceived as an integral part of the process of economic growth and social progress in the contemporary world (Chaudhry I. S., 2007).

Empowerment of women is a multifaceted process which includes many factors contributing to it. Secure work and career opportunities, provision of education, availability of health facilities, freedom to expressing opinions, share in household decision making, right to fight for justice, having access and involvement in national decisions and policy making are some of the factors that combines up to create an environment which makes a woman empowered and equally influencing as men in a society (Pearson, 2004). Women are most commonly the main caretakers of the family and more often than men spend their time and money on family and children. It has been analyzed that a woman's empowerment tends to reduce neglected nutrition and mortality

of the children, decreases fertility, and deepen social concerns and cares (Varkey, Kureshi, & Lesnick, 2010). Same as the health and availability of health facilities, provision of education to female masses, availability of career opportunities as equal to men, and freedom to express opinions regarding any social or political matters, all are combined up to make women in any society empowered and as equal to men (Malik & Courtney, 2011).

The concept of women empowerment emerged globally in 1970's. International Women Year 1975, Three International Conferences on Women held in 1975, 1980 and 1985, the Decade for Women, and most noticeable Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) were all the steps to draw world's attention toward that half of the population of the world who carries out two-thirds of its work, but receives only one-tenth of world's total income and owned less than one-hundredth of its property in return (Chaudhary, Chani, & Pervaiz, 2012). UNDP in its Human Development Report (1995) talked about women's empowerment by focusing on gender equality. The aforementioned report presented the strategies and means to promote gender equity and to reduce gender inequalities. This report the due emphasized on women's participation in domestic as well as national decision making. Gender specific indices like Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measures (GEM) were also introduced this report. In 2000, almost 189 countries under the umbrella of the United Nations Organization signed the eight Millennium Development Goals, out of which, the third goal was to promote gender equality and empowerment of women (MDG3). In the same context, the World Bank Policy Research Report considered gender equality as an important policy tool for not just the well-being of women but for the progressive impact on their family and thus, the whole society (King & Andrew D, 2001). Recently, in the World Development Report (2012) of the World Bank which is mainly devoted the to the Gender Equality and Development argued that the success of majors taken for global development hinges on gender equality and recommended the nations to adopt public policies that promote gender equity as a means of ensuring economic growth (Razavi, World Development Report 2012-Gender Equality and Development—An Opportunity Both Welcome and Missed, 2012). Over the last two decades, women's empowerment has become a focal point for development efforts worldwide.

Women empowerment is a critical development concern around the world, especially in developing countries like Pakistan. It is widely accepted that women empowerment is necessary for reduction in poverty, the economic and social growth specifically in developing countries (Bardhan & Klasen, 2000). Pakistan, since its independence has been facing many hurdles towards its way to development. From major economic challenges to many social as well as political issues, many factors have been affecting the smooth pace of growth of the country. Among many cultural and social issues, gender

discrimination is one of the problems of country has been facing. National and international initiatives have been taken to reduce the disparities among genders, but the idea of gender equality and women's right hold an unequal and dissimilar position in the country. Being almost 50% of the total population, women in Pakistan are still fighting for their rights and their due share in the country.

The World Economic Forum's global gender gap has ranked as the second worst country in the context of gender equality by being at a dismal 143 out of 144 listed countries (Express Tribune, 2016). Many religious, social and extremist activist groups or individuals have been the reason behind such biased and discriminated behavior of the country toward women even after seven decades. It is fairly appreciable to acknowledge the fact that the scenario for women in term of their basic rights, security and available opportunities in the country has changed quite a lot in the past few years, but it also important to understand and accept the root causes behind such slow progress towards a fair and non-discriminatory state for everyone. One of the major reasons of why it has always been difficult to create a social, cultural or structural change in Pakistan is the inconsistency of policies, instability and distress among the policy makers in the country. In a country where there has been political instability, military coups, dissolution of governments, etc., it is fairly understood that no policies with the aim to bring a change in the country or mindset of people have been fully successful so far. Same with the case of all the efforts for provision of women's rights and removing gender inequalities, which have not been seen making as much change in the society as anticipated.

Objective

The objective of this paper is to understand the root causes behind the low influence and share of women in the development of the country since last seven decades, with the specific aim to investigate and examine the policies and steps taken during Musharraf's Regime for the empowerment of women in Pakistan. The paper will also aim to focus to shed a comparative analysis of the share of women in the growth and development of the economy before and after Musharraf's regime.

Review of Literature

In order to analyze the scenario of women's empowerment around the world and in Pakistan, and to examine the policies implemented by previous governments of Pakistan to eradicate gender biasness, it is necessary to extensively review the literature available in the field of women empowerment and women's rights around the world.

The review literature is divided into two parts, the first part includes the researches on women empowerment and women's rights around the world. While the second part

includes the literature available on the policies and strategies implemented in Pakistan for the development of a nation without gender disparity.

On the historical evidences of women rights and women liberalization, (O' Pry, 2012) compared the women of Athens and Sparta on the basis of their freedom and rights. He mentions in his research that these ancient entities can be differentiated on the basis of their treatment toward their off springs. He writes that both gender children were equally important to Spartans whereas male children were given more importance in Athens' civilization. He makes a point that a very few historical evidences are available on female's participation in different activities. However, it is probable that the females of ancient times held opinions as worthy and strong as men did but were never given a chance to voice their ideas.

Rehman, et al., (2013) emphasizes more on gender empowerment than women empowerment alone. He holds a view that men in third world countries are also weak and need help in this regard.

Dr. Varghese T., (2011) have conducted a similar research in Sohar region, Oman by collecting sample of 150 women, the findings suggest that women in Oman are performing better in household decision making than social empowerment. The author also recommends that strengthening of the legal system to guarantee equal rights and opportunities for everyone can help empower women in Oman.

Chaudhry, et al., (2012) studied the women empowerment in Pakistan with a different aspect. The study explains the concept of women empowerment with respect to Islamic teachings and ideologies. The authors did an empirical study using the data from southern Punjab with the aim to remove the misleading ideologies related to the suppression of women in Islam. The results of the study suggest that years of education of women, working opportunities, education index of the household, access to basic health facilities all have a significant impact.

Kohm & Holmes, (2000) wrote in their article that the prior efforts made to claim the women's rights caused positive outcomes in generating opportunities for women and also had positive impacts on human rights indicators. She continues to write that, later on, this effort on claiming women's rights deemed on emphasizing some important privileges by activists that are crucial in deciding the fate of women. She is of the opinion that the women's rights movement that was once started for noble causes remained in vain due to conflict of interest and impurity of intentions

Mason & Smith, (2003) specifically analyzed the situation of married women and progress of empowerment of women in the developing countries of the Asian Continent.

The results suggest that the gender relations (specially relationship of a husband and wife) is significantly influenced by the values, norms and cultures of the odserved countries. The authors recommend that increase in minimum age of female for marriage, education etc can play a vital role in changing the mindset of the society.

Gupta & Yesudian, (2006) discussed and concluded on the basis of empirical findings that in India 43% of the total female population have a high autonomy in household matters. The results also suggest that only 43% of women in India defy domestic violence while 40% have no gender preference attitude. It is the increased and improved availability of education for females around the world which has affected the conventional norms of suppressing women and male dominance in India.

Chaudhry et al., (2012) analyzed different approaches about women empowerment in Pakistan specifically. Using the data from1996 to 2009, the authors examined how much impact and influence women's own consciousness about their empowerment can create. The results suggest that women's own consciousness about their empowerment, their economic and overall development all have a positive significant impact on the empowerment of women in Pakistan, which was measured by Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) index. The authors also recommend to empower women economically through providing home based/ small business opportunities and increasing their role and share in decision making on different levels.

The second half of the literature consist extensive review of the available articles on the policies and laws related to women and women's empowerment in Pakistan.

Weiss, (1999) argued that women has to organized themselves into groups with a political purpose, the analysis suggests the is required to make essential advancement in the making of a civil society in Pakistan which is viable and tolerant to have male and female equally participating in the society.

Weiss, (2003) critically analyzed the role of Pakistan at the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and how the government should act to eradicate gender discrimination not only in the social sense but also in legal sense. The author also argued that it is the need of time to remove the misleading concepts and transform the prevailing wrong Islamic interpretations of women's legal rights while complying to the requirements of CEDAW.

Khan, S., (2003) analyzed the Zina Ordinance and other laws and Regulations by collecting primary information through interviewing women from different areas of Pakistan. Her research and analysis suggest that economic development, human rights, globalization and the continuing costs of militarization due to war against terrorism all

are connected. The author recommends to create an environment that will bring about the repeal of the laws while contributing to trans-national female solidarity.

Imran (2005) examines the trend of sexual violence against women in Pakistan while specifically the rape cases and the governmental legislation control it. The author concluded that the gender discriminatory nature of these laws serves as a harmful weapon in the hands of the patriarchal mindset of our society and recommended to take steps to initiate, involve and build the opposition and struggle for the oppose the laws against gender discriminatory.

Qadri & Umer (2015) examined the changes and improvement in the women's rights policies and activities in Musharraf's regime. As during the time period from 1999 to 2008, Pakistan went through many social and structural reforms which helped strengthen the country and improve its image in the international world. The decisions and policy amendments done during the Parvez Musharraf's regime related to the empowerment of women and the eradication of gender inequality are noteworthy achievements. But it is also important to realize the importance of women in the society and generating a better mechanism for the protection of women's rights in the country to gain fruitful results in long-run.

Lau (2007) reviews and analyzed the Hudood Ordinance Act and specifically the law against the Offense of Zina. The author suggest that there existed many misleading concepts and clauses added in the Hudood Ordinance on the name of Islam, which later amended to design a law which weakened the inequities of Zina Ordinance while keeping and maintaining the Islamic laws conformity.

Zia (2009) refer the era of Pervez Musharraf as era with several sociological changes in the country and discussed the Islamic and secular identity with reference to understandings and paradoxes of politics in the Pakistani women.

Bari (2010) specifically analyzed the performance of women parliamentarians in Pakistan. It is recommended by the author that association of female legislators with the women rights movements and networking for collective voice can be identified as a milestones in the pathway to women's political empowerment.

Qadri et al., (2015) again studied and argued that policies for women empowerment in Musharaf's regime and concluded that there exist potential in the existing policies and laws to eradicate the gender disparity from the country. It is also recommended that despite there are potential policies, lack of political will, and inconsistency in the efforts, the policies have not been enough to provide the anticipated fruitful results.

Methodology

The methodology incorporates an extensive reading of existing literature as well as observation on the evolution of women's rights around the world, with special emphasis on the women empowerment and gender equality in the political context of Pakistan.

For the said purpose, extensive and essential discussion has been made on the political history of Pakistan and how Pakistan has emerged itself as an state working for the eradication of gender discrimination. In order to analyze the aforementioned scenarios and to examine the affects and efficiency of policies and amendments in women rights law taken place during Musharraf's regime, a comparative analysis has been done on the basis of available statistical data on the participation of women in decision making and economic development of the country.

Politics and Women Empowerment in Pakistan

History and literature make it evident to analyze the favorable and unfavorable eras in the social and political history of Pakistan in term of women's empowerment in the economy. General Zia ul Haq's political regime can be considered as the most unfavorable regime for women's rights in Pakistan. In the Islamization era of General Zia UL Haq in the year 1979, the country's traditions discouraged women to make their careers and limiting their activities as an individual part of the society. In the Zia's regime, women had faced many problems and mostly their rights were suppressed in the name of Islam. It was the era when females in the country were not considered as an important part of the society and their due share in the development of the nation was totally neglected. The country had faced a lot of hurdles in developing the appropriate policies for women's right and to empower women in the society in accordance with the cultural definitions and religious attributes. In almost all policies and legislations done in that era, whether the legal or political structure, women suffered the inequality and injustice in comparison of men. One of another outcome of such policies and mindset of the state was the building of male dominant society, which later became another hurdle in the process of gender equality and women's rights and share in the economy.

On the other hand, looking at the history of Pakistan from a bird's eye view, and how the role of women in the society has become more prominent and evident in the past few years, the era of General Parvez Musharraf is considered as the liberal administration under a military dictator. Structural changes, liberalization of media, war against terrorism, improved performance of Educational system, devolution of power, amendments in the Hadood laws and change in policies about the share and seats of women in parliaments, etc., are few of the noteworthy achievement and influencing reforms that helped in building a new and positive image of Pakistan globally (Yilmaz,

2011). According to United Nations, the HDI has reached up to approximately 2.7% which was higher than the past and preceding statistics of other governments. Same as the many other social and cultural aspects in the country, during the regime of General Pervaiz Musharraf, the procedure to enlighten and empowering females had begun with the full power.

History of Women's Right in Pakistan

After seventy years of struggle, like many other issues, rights for women in Pakistan is still a major issue which is being a root cause for lesser woman participation in the social and economic development of the country. According to Human Development Report, Pakistan has been rated among the poorest (0.179 while the average index was 0.226) among the other South Asian countries on the Gender Development Index (GDI) (Chaudhry I. S., 2007). Women rights and aim to increase the share of women in the economic development of the country have been an important part of policy making by almost every government in last seven decades. Some governments succeeded to achieve their goals, while most of them showed and proved their keen interest to empower women only on paper. Quaid-e-Azam had the aim to empower women in the country as he always accepted the importance of women in building a strong nation. But due to his short time span after independence, his aim could not flourish fully during his era. After the demise of Quaid-e-Azam Pakistan faced many issues because of which aims like empowering women could not get the due importance as it needed during the post-independence era.

In the year 1948 UNDHR, the universal declaration of the human rights was presented and accepted by the United Nation Organization. It was the very first case where the woman's presence was the obvious at the vanguard of the international scene. It was primarily the first declaration which was signed by Pakistan, according to which the government of Pakistan was liable to accept all the declaration and resolutions passed by UNDHR related to human rights for any gender. Pakistan also showed interest in fulfilling the regulations and commitments purposed by UNO. The journey toward a country without discrimination on the basis of gender, and struggle to maintain equal rights for women almost stopped during the Islamization of General Zia ul Haq's regime. It was the era when women in the country were suppressed and neglected in the society on the name of misleading Islamic ideologies. Islam is considered as a religion of balance. Islam seeks and encourages the balance in people and the society as a whole. Any sort of disturbance that would create imbalance in society and for individual is considers in just and unfair in Islam. To show the importance of gender equality Allah (SWT) in the holy Quran, addresses both men and women in several verses (Chaudhary & Nosheen, 2009). During their era, the Zia government supported the culture of suppressing women and maintaining a male dominant society in the name of Islam. In all the reforms and policy

making, women suffered high inequality as compared to men in every field of life. In the year 1979 the country also witnessed the development of the Women's Division, basically the pioneer to the delegate of the Ministry of Women's Development of the country. But this institution, due to lack of internal debates and discussions, presented the highly observed ideas regarding the women's rights in Pakistan (Qadri & Umer, 2015). This development had increased the contradictions in the country regarding the rights of country women. The basic disagreement was about determining the acceptable roles and rights for females for different areas which indicated the need of in depth and enormous debate on the topic. Due to the lack of will, the women's division could not do much in practice for the empowerment and rights of women in the country. As soon as Zia's regime over, the discriminatory laws were disseminated. The process of enlightening women's role in the country and bringing gender equality started again with reconciliations with all the stakeholders in the country. However, it was clearly understood that it will be a long journey to build a safe and equal state for females, while fighting the misconceptions about Islam regarding role and share of women and to bring change in the cultural and traditional mindsets of the society.

In the year 1995, the fourth world conference, Beijing Platform for Action held in Beijing. Pakistan also participated in this conference. After attending this conference, Pakistan approved and created the National Plan of Action for the consultation and involvement of the civil society (GoP, 2012). Pakistan also approved the 'Forward looking Strategies for the Advancement of women' (FLSAW) in the year 1985 in Nairobi (Dawn News, 2011). One of the most important decisions was to accept and regulate The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in Pakistan. The main purpose of this commission was to protect equal political, social, economic, educational, and employment rights for women throughout the world (GoP, 2012). As explained earlier, most of the policies and strategies to eradicate discrimination against women fail to be applied with full interest and intention. During the regimes of Mohatarma Benazir Bhutto and Mian Muhammad Nawaz Shareef, none of the government succeeded to submit a single report to CEDAW.

Women's Rights in Musharraf's Regime

General (R) Parvez Musharraf took hold of the state in October 1999 and resigned in August 2008. During his almost eight years of rule and governance, Pakistan enjoyed many impeccable structural and policy reforms which helped the country to grow economically and improved Pakistan's image globally. Musharraf put policy measures for the betterment of education system in Pakistan, started the war against terrorism, provided a liberalized platform for print and electronic media and flourished and decentralized the power and governance to the lower levels of governments. Among all these noteworthy achievements, the government of Musharraf also expressed full interest in the empowerment of women and development of an equal state for men and women.

To secure social status of women and increase their rights and share in the economic activities in the country, several amendments were made in unfair laws and regulations. However, such amendments were not able to eradicate the discrimination against females completely, but provided a strong roadmap toward a better and equal state.

Gender reform action plan and IT programs were some of the noticeable results achieved through National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women (2002) (Qadri & Umer, 2015). In the National Assembly 20% seats were reserved for women and 18% in the Senate, were some of the important achievements towards the increasing role of women in the local and national decision making.

Late General Zia made changes in Hadood laws, the male misogynists were mainly responsible for these changes (Jahangir & Jilani, 1990). Under these amendments, instead of punishing the rapists, the laws were molded to be used against the victims as in some cases, pleading them for committing crime as adultery (Dawn News , 2006). However, many inquiries done in different times suggested that there is a serious need to start the debate on these to make further required amendments in Hadood Ordinance to protect women from the social unjust and insult (Zahoor & Afridi, 2014) (Goonesekere, 2004)

In the year 2004, the Musharraf's government submitted the very first report to C.E.D.A.W with the intention for the better planning under C. E. D. A. W and making policies and legislation to eradicate discrimination against women.The Honor Killing Billing (Criminal Law regarding honor killing) was passed in 2004 which clearly stated honor killing a crime, punishable by the court of law (Madaik, 2005). It all happened for improved understanding and planning under CEDAW that Criminal Amendment Act 2004 was endorsed (CEDAW, 2007). The Women Protection Act was passed in 2006, which provided a secure and just environment for women to work in the society. The act was passed with the objective to protect women from harassment on workplaces. During Musharraf's regime, another major step was taken toward an women empowered society by placing rape laws the under penal code. The objective of this historic decision was to provide rape victims justice without being blamed for the act. Presidential Ordinance (2006) permitted safeguard for ladies convicted on all charges except terrorism and murder (Qadri & Umer, 2015).The formation and restructuring of the ministry of women's development, the development of the National Commission on the Status of Women in 2000 and formation of the First Woman Bank were one of the steps taken by the Musharraf's government in the process of empowering women in the country (CEDAW, 2007).

After Affects of Musharraf's Policies

Parvez Musharraf's era of governance brought many changes in the laws and regulation related to women rights and empowerment of female in the country. The effecst and influence of those amendments and decisions could be seen through the available statistical evidence from 2000 to this date.

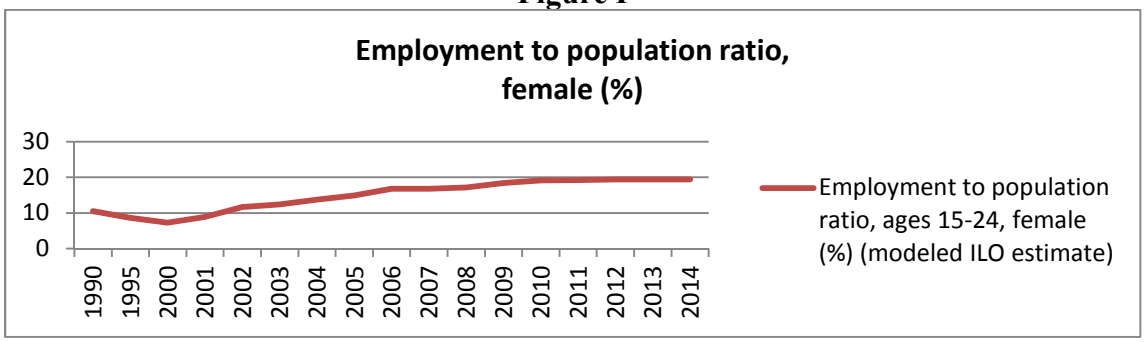
Table I

years	Population, female (% of total)	Labor force participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15+) (national estimate)	School enrollment, primary, female (% gross)
1990	48.16436684	11.30000019	40.45981
1995	48.32231508	12.69999981	
2000	48.40548084	16.29999924	59.53671
2001	48.41618587	16.24447394	60.20979
2002	48.42552296	16.20000076	60.99193
2003	48.43560539		65.50591
2004	48.44899468	18	70.11277
2005	48.4671101	19.46383402	76.26907
2006	48.49058761	21	74.75929
2007	48.51806816	21.29999924	82.59632
2008	48.54656878	21.79999924	84.03872
2009	48.5722445	23.10000038	86.29201
2010	48.59257066	24.20000076	87.80067
2011	48.60702257	24.39999962	84.679
2012	48.6166504	24.39999972	84.80677
2013	48.62255116	24.29999924	83.22106
2014	48.62632505	24.48269433	85.81017

Source: World Bank Data Bank 2017

Table I shows the data of the female population (as percentage of total population), female labor force participation rate and percentage of female school enrollment in the country. The data show the noteworthy improvement in female labor force participation and female school enrolment 1995 to 2014. Such statistics prove the success of policy decisions taken during Musharraf's Regime for the empowerment of women in Pakistan. Highly increased female school enrolment rate shows how almost 85% of the female population are enrolled in schools, proving the availability and easy access to education for females in the country. Almost 25% of female labour force participation is a true evidence of the increasing empowerment of women in the country, and shows how the policies regarding work place harassment implemented during Mursharraf's regime have played an influential role in the increased share of women in the growth and development of the country.

Figure I



Source: Data Collected From World Bank Data Bank 2017

As with increasing wave of women empowerment in the country since Musharraf's era of governance, huge improvement in many social and economic indicators (related to female) can be analyzed through the statistics. Figure I shows the female employment to population ratio in the country, this indicator shows the proportion of a country's female population that is employed (ages 15-24 are generally considered the youth population). Female employment to population ratio have increased impressively from only 7% in 2000 to almost 20% in 2014. The policies related to work place harassments passed during Musharraf's regime are the root cause behind this successful increase, which improved the worked environment and encouraged women to work with men in every field. The same effects can be seen in Table II, by analyzing the percentage of female employment in three main sectors of he economy i.e. agriculture, industry and services.

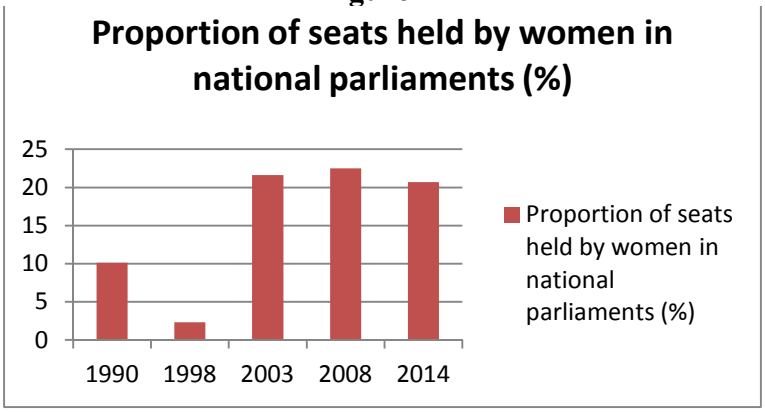
Table II

Years	1995	2000	2005	2014
Employment in agriculture, female (%)	67.40000153	72.90000153	67.30000305	74
Employment in industry, female (%)	10.69999981	9	15	14.39999962
Employment in services, female (%)	21.89999962	18.10000038	17.60000038	11.69999981

Source: World Bank DataBank 2017

The share of women in the national and economic decision making is also very important to maintain an undiscriminatory state on the basis of gender (Shah, Aziz, & Ahmad, 2015). Figure II shows the percentage of seats held by females in the national assembly of Pakistan, which has been doubled since the time Musharraf 's era of governance. All these facts and statistics prove the positive impact and changes created by the policies. Amendments done in laws during Parwez Musharraf's regime to helped to eradicate discrimination against women and allowed them to have equal rights and share in the economy as men.

Figure II



Source: World Bank DataBank 2017

Conclusions

As women are almost 50% of the total population of Pakistan, their importance and influence on the society can no longer be neglected. Pakistan since its independence has been fighting with many social and cultural stigmas which are being the hurdles in the growth and development of the country. After the demise of Quaid-e-azam, many preceding governments tried to make and implement policies to full fill the dream to create an equal state for all, irrespective of religion, cast or gender. But like many other policies, laws and policies related to women's rights have also failed to eradicate or even reduce discrimination again females in the country. The roots of unjust rights for women in Pakistan gained strength during General Zia-ul-Haq's regime. The regime of Zia-ul-Haq used wrong and misleading concepts about how Islam supports suppression of women, which lead to the building a male dominant society. Soon after the end of Zia's era, the preceding governments timely understood the loopholes in the policies related to the empowerments and the rights of women and took initiatives for the betterment of the status of women in Pakistan (Qadri & Umer, 2015). The most and noteworthy efforts were done during another autocratic regime, during General Parvez Musharraf's era of governance. During the eight year span of time, many rules and amendments were passed which were aimed to increase the rights, role and participation of women in the economy. The amendments in the laws about workplace harassment cleansed the professional atmosphere for females and provided them a safe and fair environment for work on gender equality basis in different public and private sector industries. The amendments in rape and honor killing laws with the objective to provide rape victims some hope of justice. And lastly, the increased share of females in the national and provincial assemblies also encouraged women to participate in active decision making in the country. Though it is a bitter truth that even after seventy years of independence, Pakistan still cannot be called a state that has uniform rights for both men and women, but it is also important to realize and appreciate the efforts of policy makers to change the mindset of the country toward the status and significance of women in the development of Pakistan.The most critical aspect of women empowerment is the legal empowerment, which guarantees protection of social, cultural and economic rights of women in terms of justice, property rights, employment rights, safety and protection rights. Many governmental and non- government organizations (N.G.Os) have been playing their vital roles to fight out the discrimination against women in Pakistan and to get equal rights for men and women in the country. The women today, are also striving hard to protect their rights through performance of the laws (Khan R. E., 2012) (Raja, 2010), but there is still adequate legislation available and required for the protection of women's rights in the country. At the end, it is concluded that women empowerment which is declared as Millennium Development Goal by UNDP could be achieved only when all concerned bodies will work in cooperation with understanding women's capabilities and their contributions to the development process.

Policy Recommendations

It is now a dire need of time that law enforcement agencies are required to revise the laws and regulations. The women lack confidence upon justice system, and hence laws and

law providers are required to make the system safe and easily approachable for women. The linkages of women's legislators with the women's movement and networking for capacity enhancement can play toward the pathway to women's political, social and legal empowerment.

The better implementation of the mechanism is also required for the protection of women's rights and to make them legally empowered to become more active member of the society and playing their due vital role in the development of this country (Khan R. E., 2012) (Raja, 2010). At the end, the authors recommends that the government in coordination with society must work jointly for the betterment of fifty percent population of the country. To empower them by creating an environment where they can attain and avail the opportunities, security and their due stake in the economy which will not only empower the women in the country, but will be the initial steps in the development of a fair, honest and prosperous society.

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