

## Women Representatives and Politics of Image Construct in Pakistan: A Study of Parliamentary Debates on Selected Issues (2013-2018)

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*Politics and political process across the world has generated a debate that how to create an inclusive democracy in which vulnerable segments of the society has to be provided a sense of equality and justice. Pakistan since 1947 and onward has undergone a systemic change to address multiple issue and problems that needed to refurbish its social and political system to accommodate the justified concerns of the subjected parts of the polity. Women quota was increased in political representation which helped them to break the glass ceiling effect and gave a sense of self-construction. In the parliament, they automated the concept 'personal is political' to dispel the social taboos which were working under the auspices of patriarchy and religiosity. In the above given time span of the government, women parliamentarians raised their voices over all kinds of issues and abridged the gulf between public and private. Despite toeing party lines of which they are nominee, they were successful in creating niche for them in the domain of politics. They developed their own caucus to make their identity meaningful in the politics of Pakistan. Parliamentary debates from archives of the parliament were consulted for this research.*

## 1. Introduction

The image of women, which is already present in the transition or transforming society of Pakistan, actually exists in taboos. Taboos express that women are sanctified object. Demand of the modernity is, if not contrary to break the taboos but to make a space for woman whereby she should be an acceptable partner. All could be happened if there is a change in behavior through some means of modernity. Women are marginalised section of the society and their plight could only be changed if they got a chance to become leader of their own destiny and gender gap report of 2023 indicated that Pakistan is the country where women have the smallest share of senior, managerial and legislative roles at a mere 4.5pc (Dawn,2023). In 2015, Pakistan stood at 135 out of 177 countries at the scale of human development index and government of Pakistan was making possible efforts to ameliorate the plight of women by opening up the opportunities in economic and political spheres. Despite the fact, Pakistan was placed at 145 out of 146 countries in Global Gender Gap Report (Dawn, 2022). Despite the fact women tendency to come into the sphere of politics has been up-ticked by the increase of their contest number in 2013 election on general seats. They were 108 in 2013 as compare to 76 in 2008 and most of them were on party tickets. By observing electoral laws, political parties like PPP, PML (N), PTI and JUI (F), MQM and others awarded 5% tickets to the women of total tickets given on general seats.

Pakistan is a nation state which cannot disassociate itself from the community of the world nations, and its association with the world is through multiple different agreements, covenants and as well as understandings and protocols where it has to observe the norms of international community to construct the image of women as equal partners and as agents of change (Yahya et al., 2022). To present women in all spheres of life and gradually to equip them with modern means of communication and skill to compete with the modern world is a challenging task (Jamil, 2021). By their presence in the parliament, women dismissed the count of male domination as opinion makers, and held the leverage of setting the tone of assembly debates on all kinds of issues as substantive democracy demands (Jamil, 2021). Pakistan is also a state in which political activities are connected with socio religious concerns of the people and therefore a challenge of bridging the public and private spheres of life is difficult one. It is also very interesting to note that the political debate in mainstream media programs are also dominated by male members of the parliament with very few participation of female members of the parliament (Yahya et al., 2022).

Due to inconsistent socioeconomic growth, which differs from region to region and frequently results in women's systematic subjugation to men, women's status in Pakistan is varied (Khalid & Rana, 2021). Women are now more dependent on male authority in the social, political, and economic domains as a result of this circumstance (Aspinall et al., 2021). Women's status in politics has expanded in Pakistan as a result of women's quotas. This shift is seen in the transfer of political authority from male scions to female spouses, albeit with significant restrictions (Mufti & Jalalzai, 2021). A large number of fractions in the society believe that the women participation in decision making bodies can be enhanced by increasing gender quotas in policy making platforms (Rai, 2020). A quota system's primary goal is to

increase the number of women in politics in order to lessen their marginalisation there. However, quotas seriously cast doubt on their ability to contribute in the process of empowering the women because there are many other barriers in the empowerment of women in Pakistani society. The active participation with increased mobilization of women in parliament has brought the change in the governance structure (Adhikari & Saha, 2021). The given concerns are relevant in the context of Pakistan but are not sufficient as said by Bano that “women are tolerated as long as they do not challenge their male colleagues [and] so while they are in parliament, they have little power to achieve change (Bano, 2009; Baig et al., 2020). Whereas women parliamentarians in Pakistan have attained autonomy that is bounded by same system of behavioural norms, not seems unusual (Safdar & Yasmin, 2022). They contributed positively in bringing their concerns and point of views before the male colleagues, and infused a sense of realization among them that their understanding in defining the issues is as solid as their male fellows in the parliament.

### **1.1 Historic-Legal Frame of Reference**

After independence, women participation was very low in politics despite of the fact that there was no restriction on female participation in politics. Therefore, all the tree constitution of Pakistan has provided the provision of reserved seats for women to increase the political participation of female at national level (Jabeen & Muhammad, 2021). Women have reserved seats in the parliament since 1956 due to the lack of representation of women in national politics. Women have three percent quota in the 1956 constitution. Ten seats were reserved for women for a term of ten years. These quota seats were divided equally between West and East Pakistan, per Article 44(2) (1) of the 1956 constitution (PILDAT, 2004). In 1977, the first election was conducted in accordance with the 1973 constitution, with ten seats reserved for women. However, assemblies were disbanded shortly after the election due to the declaration of martial law in July 1977. The sunset clause and the retention of the same number of women's seats from the 1985 election were retained for the 1988 election, while the number of female members rose from 10 to 20. Before the 1990 elections, this provision expired, and from 1990 until 1997, no seats were reserved for women. Politics of Pakistan has entailed the political parties by legislation to observe the legal binding in awarding the election ticket not less than 5% of the total awarding tickets in 2017 and 17% on reserve seats in 2002 and after. In the general elections held in 2002, 57 women contested on general seats and 13 of them won, and with 60 reserved seats, the National Assembly had 74 women members which was 21.6% of the 342-member house. In 2008 general elections, 64 women contested on general seats out of which 16 won. With 60 reserved seats, 76 women were part of National Assembly constituting 22.2% of the total membership of the house. In 2013 general elections, out of the 161 women contested on general seats for the lower house of parliament, only nine won. This reduced women strength to 70 or 20.5% in the National Assembly (The Express Tribune, 2018)

Historically right to vote and right to election for women was contested by the different action forums like All Pakistan Women Association (APWA) and Women Action Forum (WAF). Gradually this right was granted to present the picture of Pakistan as democratic, progressive state. Women for said cause moved out of their tradition bound circles and as

Dushka Saiyid observed that women manned the polling stations in 1970 election fervently by heeding to the appeal of the manifesto of the political party dealt with the issues affecting them (Saiyid, 2001). Dushka Saiyid painted the picture of religious parties support to the Fatima Jinnah and Benazir Bhutto by Jammah-i-Islami and Jammiat Ulama-i-Islam respectively in 1964 and in 1988 election. Her stance seems out of context of these parties' fundamental and core position in implementing the *Shariat* as source of law which clearly defined the position of women segregated in public sphere. In election 2008 and 2013, both these parties were the part of MMA (Muttahidha Majlis Ammal) and in their electoral manifesto they defined the status of women according to the principles of sharia.

## 1.2 Socio-Cultural Derivatives and Image of Women

Pakistan as state is confronting the social forces which are likely to obstruct its path whereby it has to change itself to earn-up its space and to reorient the social norms where women connected roles are easiest to accept (Moreno, 2022). In one way or the other women parliamentarians by their participation in assembly debates over different nature of issues broke the taboos of their low genius and understanding and further enhanced the level of acceptability of their presence as inevitable for equitable sense of justice (Shairgojri, 2022). The journey of women participation in public sphere in the context of British India was set on track by the administrative sense of the authority which gradually adopted the philosophy of compatibility between the customary practices of the natives and the principles of civil justice attuned to morality and positive law (Alam, 2020). The authority of British in India would not have went against the spirit of customary law if they had been in consonance with British concept of propriety (Saiyid, 1998; Ahmed et al., 2024).

Women representation in the parliament of Pakistan had been seen a sign of symbolic presence by the policy analysts due to their indirect representative character but their substantial presence in number has visibly embodied the needs, interests and identity of the women of which they are the claimant of representativeness without discounting the importance of their participation in the public sphere by direct or indirect way (Jabeen & Muhammad, 2021). The precepts of democracy demand that equal participation of women should be ensured in decision making bodies of political nature to ensure the protection of interests, values and shared sense of common experiences of women (Eni et al., 2022). It also carries the spirit of Beijing Platform of Action (1995) that women's equal participation in decision making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account (Sawer, 2000; Baraza & Koech, 2020). The other concern of this argument is that how women parliamentarians can alter the engendered perception as being 'cronies of their party's leadership' in parliament to a new one 'standing for is not the same as acting for' (Pitkin, 1972; Hayat, 2022). This article will also reflect upon the kind of difference their presence has created while generating their opinion on different issues and make a contributory effect to take part in debates and discussions.

The presence of women in parliament all the way is a healthy sign to grant the legitimacy to the political system and to cast a look upon those issues which had been overlooked in the past (Celis & Childs, 2023). Within the dichotomy of the perceptions, women's rights activists

embraced the critique of disillusioned segment of the society or the personnel who held the ground of their argument by categorising the social relationships in public and private spheres in the name of religion, custom, conventions and social taboos. In the context of Pakistan, emerging debates in the realm of feminists are not very much diffused in ordinary circles of the society, but its mobilised parts are the major source of dovetailing the modernity into academic, bureaucratic and political circles which is a considerate lifeline in defining the relationships at policy levels (Crangle et al., 2022). Political parties are habitual to give female political representation to those females who has influential political background not on the basis of their competence and political performance (Awan, 2023). This is one of the major reasons that female participation from common public seems less in Pakistan. The other factors that produce hurdles in women representations are literacy, economic dependence, cultural values, societal norms, religious misinterpretations, male dominating society and lack of awareness (Begum, 2023).

This article has covered those parts of activity of women representatives in the parliament which could provide a sense of empirical judgement about the level of their participation that how far their representation was effective in determining the nature of their sharing. So, the representativeness will move on scale that will idealise the picturesque character of women parliamentarians and then will pragmatically point out the normative adjustment in terms of impact on policies. Under this consideration, representation of interests, ideas, values, and viewpoints are transmitted collectively. To what extent do their physical encounters under symbolic debates impact their group's standing and the credibility of political institutions? To what extent will the utility arguments be guaranteed by the equal right to offer justice reasons, to engage in public decision-making, and to be free from discrimination by public life's structures.

## 2. Literature Review

Phillips underlined the structural constraints of Pakistan society which render less chance to women to move and do the work of their own choice. His research explores how women's struggles against cultural obstacles and their personalities are impacted by culture and the underlying glass ceilings. Women in Pakistan are viewed as significant symbols of the country's unity and are required to adhere to rigid cultural norms that impede their advancement in a variety of spheres of life. Pakistan is a patriarchal society where male dominance and control over female members are maintained. (Phillips, 2003; Latif et al., 2020).

Burrell argued that women can themselves shape the social image by their presence in the domain of politics (Burrell & Schweyher, 2021). He stated that first symbolic argument, that the presence of women in parliament increases respect for women in society, is also associated with a motivational or role model argument-that the visible presence of women in public life raises the aspirations of other women, the "girls can do anything" effect. Some have suggested this is one of the most important functions that women legislators can perform (Burrell, 1994; Sevi & Blais, 2023).

In the same vein Roomi and Parrott (2008) expressed the prevailing norms of the society which hinder the social mobility of women by segregating their roles. They stated that the heterogeneous society of Pakistan have been reflected in the status of women in Pakistan as



well. Different areas of Pakistan have different cultures with respect to status of women based on their cultural norms and religious perceptions. Sometimes they are different but overlapping as well but sometimes they are completely contradictory. (Roomi & Parott, 2008).

Different authors have given their own consequential remarks about the position of women in the society which could not move on the ladder of social change as per the expectations of the modernity. These barriers can be identified as either internal/external or vertical/horizontal (Weyer, 2007) or societal and cultural (Inglehart & Norris, 2000) and these factors impact the development of females leadership sometimes in positive ways and sometimes in negative ways (Pounder & Coleman, 2002). As Weyer (2007) made the point relevant that it is societal/cultural construct that produce the meaning which has an impact on the role differentiation of the both gender. Inglehart and Norris (2000) suggested that gender gap in politics is multidimensional phenomenon reflected in attitudes based on the structural and cultural trends of a particular conditions. By that way women realign and dealing their preferences in politics. And same has the opinion of others who relied upon such construct that implied structural determinism in defining the spheres of women and men as separate. They opined that stereotypes of the society develop consensual beliefs about character traits that describe men and women (Deaux & Major, 1987). They are a reflection of the change in public perception that is contingent upon the change in working of the institutions to categorise the differences in personality traits of both gender (Lueptow et al., 2001; Moskowitz et al., 1994).

Among these barriers, culture is believed to be the most important one because culture shapes lives of people, their beliefs, the system and structure of a society which impacts female development in personal as well as professional life (Shakeshaft, 1987). It could be said that democracy prevails in those societies which observe modern codes of equality and equity as practiced in the progressive societies of the world, and what is difficult to follow in the societies which are more prone to their normative structures as Pakistan, it is hard to permit the country functionaries to transgress the codes of social existence. In that societies, charter is not noted and hardly accompanied due to occurrence of strict male dominant society which doesn't permit government to interfere between a male and female's relationship. Culture is given high significance and is embedded in people of a selected organization; it is a manner of making feel of the sector and a body of reference for human beings of particular institution.

Thomas (1994) illuminated the individual choices and collective actions of the women and she shed light on the legislative life of the women's representatives. She held fast to a view that "wider societal debate about women's place in the public sphere has affected the way women have behaved in the political arena. As society expands its view about the extent to which women ought to participate and respond by extending their range of involvement."

Faith (1994) in her book expressed the concerns about unruly attitude of women which is the by-product of the social imperatives of her time and signified the social imperatives of women of all classes to be confined within the walls of the patriarchal familial structure. Woman had to make her choice with the operating mechanism of politics where she had to likewise make the decisions as the male choice. In this context, there is the debate of women representation in politics which should be ensured through quota for the sake of equality and

for affirmative policy decisions to ameliorate their plight. But it was not always good due to the compromising the norms of meritocracy as mentioned by Baltrunaite (2014) that quotas may increase equity at the expense of efficiency. As gender quotas do not necessarily obey to meritocracy, the average quality of those responsible for decision-making may decrease and this consideration may be used against the introduction of gender quotas in politics.

### **3. Methodology**

The study is based upon the available literature of different sorts like parliamentary debates, Journals, periodicals, political parties manifestoes and record of different committees. It relied upon the discourse of political leadership in the parliament and gave the interpretative sense to the simmering impressions of the dialogue. The mode of research is being defined as qualitative and inductive in sense. The normative and empirical sense has been generated by the diagnostic logic of interpretative method.

### **4. Results**

#### **4.1 Image Construct through Parliamentary Debates**

The above said debate has set the tone of this paper to create the image of women by applying the constructive frame of reference upon the political sharing of women representatives in the parliament. It has implied that how far women representatives were more inclined towards the issues of development irrespective of clubbing them as women issues. It will enhance the statue of women that representatives are capable to break the silence of their voice and are also able to reimagine the status of women in the society of Pakistan by breaking the social taboos.

This section has provided the evidence of parliamentary debates in which they took part to make sense of the issues as they are being grasped by the common sense of an ordinary person also. Their contribution has been portrayed as rational being equal to men by giving the impression of sensibility as implied in the debates of the issues. It has envisioned the women that they can change their social status by holding the power through political process. Women parliamentarians after 2002 got a substantial portion of seats in the house and were very proactive in mobilising the channels of political influence to get the rights based agenda and of social and economic development at table. One such study has its observation that,

“They showed a keen interest in learning and applying the rules; and as the National Assembly completed its five-year term in 2007, they were carrying an enviable record as compared to their male colleagues in key areas of legislative and non-legislative interventions, for example they asked 27% of the total questions; 30% of the total calling attentions notices; 42% of the total private members bills; and 24% of the total resolutions (Zaka, 2012).”

Women entrance in the corridors of power and politics is challenging one in Pakistan as political families had their dynastic role to determine the composition and caucus of women who to be eligible to be included in the party list for reserve seats and in similar way whom to

award ticket to contest on general seats. Despite such odds, it is healthy sign that women have become the part of power politics by some constitutional guarantees. Their number since 1973 is on increase either by the scheme of reservation or by the approval of the constituency they attained the victory on general seats through contesting the election. In 2002, 14 women on general seats won in addition to 60 reserve seats; in 2008 their number increased to 16 and in 14<sup>th</sup> national assembly 9 women were able to secure general seats. In this paper, their role will be evaluated that how far they were able along with the reserve quota seats women to bring the concerns of women into mainstream policy issues and how much was the level of their effectiveness reflected while opined on issues of national importance. In this paper much has been focused upon the Social issues and Political issues. In the context of social issues, more important are education, health and social sustainability and some of the issues are being selected here to shed light on the visionary participation of women parliamentarians.

#### **4.1.1 Issue of Education and Views of Women Parliamentarians**

Women parliamentarians like Ms. Nafeesa Inayat Ullah Khan Khattak and Senator Syeda Sughra Imam raised their voice about the medium of communication as English which is difficult to comprehend and in addition to write down in that language which isn't always indigenous, local or our countrywide language (NAP, 2014). In response to their query Mr. Baligh-ur-Rehman, Minister for Higher Education and Professional Training spoke back that they were working on this policy. This shows that they raised the voice and engaged the minister on the problem of national significance. Ms. Naeema Kishwar Khan pointed out the bad infrastructure and poor physical condition of the Medical Colleges which were not providing enough support for medical training in spite of the fact that they were charging excessive fee. Ms. Saira Afzal Tarar, the Minister for National Health Services and Regulations pointed about the business of private medical colleges and their mushroom growth. Ms. Nafeesa Inayatullah Khan Khattak wanted to introduce the Amendment Bill which is called as 'Right to Free & Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2015' for free education. The Speaker of the National Assembly preferred to provide an explanation for the salient capabilities of the Bill. Ms. Nafeesa replied to the queries, in well manner, which were raised in the House. (NAP, 2015).

Dr. Azra Fazal Pacheho from PPP asked few questions regarding the role of HEC in promoting higher education in Pakistan. She told, "every University needs to have four PhDs when it starts a program due to which it has become a machine that private and government institutes are producing a large number of PhDs. The situation of sub-standard PhDs is very alarming and the Minister may tell us what they are doing to prevent it." While responding her question, Mr. Baligh ur Rehman, the Minister for Education and Professional Training said, "we are not concerned with the number of Ph.Ds. and more Ph.Ds. are better but certainly, we are concerned with the quality (NAP, 2016)." In contemporary era, the women, traditionally not participating in protests, are now taking part actively in protests against women abuse and women rights violation across the country and a large number of female participations can be seen in any such protest in recent days (Khan et al., 2021; Aamir et al., 2022; Hassan et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2022).



#### 4.1.2 Issue of Health and Views of Women Parliamentarians

Whereas the issue of health were put to debate, women parliamentarians namely Mrs. Naeema Kishwar Khan, Azra Fazal Pachehu, Dr. Nafisa Shah and Ms. Shazia Murree raised almost same apprehensions regarding increasing number of Polio Virus cases particularly within the vicinity of KP. These parliamentarians showed their concerns as few International Agencies such as WHO and many donor nations like US have supported Pakistan in controlling this sickness but nevertheless we are not been able to cope with situation. Ms. Saira Afzal as Health Minister responded positively. She said that, “these Members know better than I do that what is the situation over there. In the past, these were the people who ruled there and there was no proper campaign regarding this disease. Recently, the polio workers have been attacked which has worsened the situation. I am saying repeatedly that whether there is an attack on polio workers or on Mosques and Churches, all these are elements that are trying to create destabilization in Pakistan. As far as the responsibility of the government is concerned, the President of Pakistan himself has gone there in the ‘*Jirga*’ the Governor of the KPK was also there. There have been highlighted two points of refusal, one is law and order situation and the second one is religious concern that the polio vaccination is ‘*harram*’ the government is trying to overcome these both. This not the problem of one political party, one province or one government but this is the problem of whole of the Pakistan and our children (NAP, 2014).

In the area of social rehabilitation, women parliamentarians were not behind the others in the house. Ms. Ayesha Saeed also raised her voice and saw eye to eye with Asma Mamdot that Sawat is also badly affected by the devastation of the flood and damaged the road network. It stopped the communication between the cities. The Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Mr. Shiekh Aftab Ahmad replied in particular to Ms. Ayesha Saeed that it is in the notice of the Prime Minister and government. The Prime Minister and the government both are aware of the utility of these road networks and all the time it is the priority agenda of the government. The National Highway Authority has been directed by the higher authorities to take up the issue as earliest as possible (NAP, 2013) Senator Kulsoom Parveen also said about flood devastation in Baluchistan. She pointed that from Jaffar Abad to Lake Maghasi and Lora Laee all the area was under flood. There were epidemics and people were dying from snake bites. It was the duty of the government in particular and our common people to pay attention to these areas (SP, 2013; Hassan et al., 2023; Mughal et al., 2023)). Women parliamentarians’ concerns were not less than male members of the Parliament. It was systemic constraint that they cannot deviate the stance of the party from which platform they were elected or chosen.

#### 4.2 Issue of Women’s Rights and Views of Women Parliamentarians

##### 4.2.1 Women’s Voting Rights

Pakistani society is also facing issue regarding the women participation in democracy because women, in some areas, are not allowed to cast their votes independently. Senator Nasreen Jalil raised a few points especially at the National Women’s Day, that how the female of Pakistan should be endorsed to take part in the process of voting. Moreover, she mentioned that we were able to empower women by providing them professional education on one hand

and giving them monetary assistance on the other hand. She mentioned that traditional setup in Pakistan had stifled their voices and they were not been able to make the decisions of their own choice. She was in the state of confusion about the position of her resolution that if the House was not providing full support to her then how could her words would carry a weight and could be taken as much as the realistic form. It shows that, some times, the female parliamentarians may face the resistance from their fellow male parliamentarians (SP, 2014).

Ms. Shazia Marri said invited the attention of the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs to reply regarding a pressing issue of public importance in District Dir, KP, regarding stopping the female voters to cast their vote in election of local government. This development has increased worries among public. Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Sheikh Aftab Ahmed, replied that the women belonging to that place had not been given the right to cast their vote. Dr. Nafisa Shah showed her concern that it seemed that ladies electorate were not cast their votes. Moreover, Dr. Shah stated that her query was that if half of the population in any particular place was not present on this election then how the overall outcomes could truly represent the real constituency and how such election could be be legitimate? (NAP, 2015).

Ms. Saman Sultana said that she wanted to raise the issue regarding further amendment in the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act, 1973 [The Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils (Amendment) Bill, 2017. Ms. Sultana stated that this Bill is pertained to women empowerment. She claimed that originally, she had introduced this Bill for the Supreme Court however the committee briefed down it for the High Courts. This bill was regarding the allocation of quota for female lawyers in Pakistan Bar Council and the Provincial Bar Councils. Mr. Zahid Hamid opined that this Bill must be referred to the Committee to seek the opinion of the concerned authorities that are Pakistan Bar Council and Provincial Bar Councils regarding the reservation of seats for female lawyers. If the Bar Councils had objection, it would be difficult to pass this Bill, he stated. (NAP, 2017).

#### **4.2.2 Honour killing and Harassment**

The female members of parliament have cited certain initiatives carried out by the Peoples Party of Pakistan (PPP), which was in power from 2008 to 2013. At that time, the PPP administration took the initiative and introduced the Bill, which the PML(N) eventually introduced. "The Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace (Amendment) Bill, 2014]". This bill amended the Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2010 [The Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace (Amendment) Bill, 2014]. The new bill was named under a new title, "The Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace (Amendment) Bill, 2014,". Speaking about the key elements, Ms. Asiya Nasir stated, "This Bill had some mistakes because it was presented in a hurry when it was first introduced in 2010." I, therefore, want these flaws to be eliminated and presented in a manner that is more comprehensive. Although the bill's actual title was Harassment of Women at Workplace, its definition included all genders. To resolve the conflict, it needs to be arranged in a certain way. This Bill broadens the definition of employee. The home-based and domestic workers were not protected by this bill. Because they lack Committees or Unions, they have

also been included in this bill for their safety. Under this Act, the office of the Ombudsmen was established (NAP, 2014).

Senator Khalida Parveen used the case of honour killing in District Dera Ghazi Khan to illustrate her points in the aforementioned context. She said that these problems would worsen and that women's status in Pakistan would be appalling if there was no effective monitoring, legal recourse, or enforcement of the law. She referred to the honour killing case in the DG. Khan region, which had demonstrated a deterioration in the ability of law enforcement agencies to uphold the government's authority (SP, 2017).

### **4.3 Women Social Rehabilitation**

The Benazir Income Support Programme was established to improve women's socioeconomic status. With regard to this, during the BISP discussion, Senator Khalida Parveen questioned the Minister in Charge of the Cabinet Division regarding the main objectives of the programme and whether they align with the Rules of Business, 1973. If so, what key elements of the programme have been included or expanded upon in the aforementioned rules? In response, the Minister in charge of the Cabinet Division stated that improving the financial capabilities of the impoverished and their dependent family members would help to alleviate poverty and advance fair wealth distribution, particularly for lower-class populations (SP, 2014).

Senator Sitara Ayaz stated, "I want to bring attention to BISP." This program was actually started with the hope that it would empower women even in rural areas, and it produced excellent results. This program was highly appreciated on international forums. I'm not sure about other provinces, but in ours, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, women haven't been able to get this fund or right for the past two years. The names of women are on the list, but funds are unavailable. It is unclear who is stealing funds and where they are going. This issue needs to be resolved by the government (SP, 2015).

### **5. Conclusion**

By having such observations and evidential proof of women parliamentarian's participation in the debates on different issues ardently articulated an image of their assertion in the social context which is less supportive to their public image. It has also been simmered out by having the look upon their stances on different issues in the assembly that they have activated their individual and collective agency. Indeed they represent the very narrow privileged section of the society but their level of sharing went contrary to establish procedural coded norms. Pakistan as striving modern polity is in double jeopardy that at one side it has to fight against the orthodoxy to create space for new values of adjustment as being inclusive and on the other end it has to project the reform agenda of social and economic change to get into the structure of cultural conformity. Legislative changes are being introduced to bring the enduring space for women in the society as the women themselves contested for it in the parliament of Pakistan. The presence of women in the power circles depend upon the party oligarchs but despite this fact they availed the opportunity of making their voice more effective by taking active part on the issues of national importance. Their participation by any means has

challenged the social taboos and makes the realisation among caucus that they can break the chain of dependency. There is more need has been felt that how they should evolve their own connections within the political networking and change should be initiated through bottom-up approach.

There is generic view about the establish norms of operating democracy that it promotes the patriarchal structure which allows women subordination. This mechanism is perpetuated by power structures and women representatives did their utmost effort to alter the lens of men which view them as being frail and weak and are born to be governed. It has also been realised by their participation that their gender identity remained but shattered the bias of the men's domination in the affairs of the state and society. They equally contributed in policy formulation over the concerns of women and of the development of the country in general.

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