

Effects / Influence of Feminist Movements in Pakistan

Introduction:

- The history of feminist's struggle to end discrimination, oppression and marginalisation against women is divided into four waves.
- These waves, although they had started in Europe, had global impact on the status of women, including women of Pakistan.
- Muhammed Ali Jinnah: "No nation can rise to the height of glory; your women are side by side with you."

Effects of Feminist Movements in Pakistan:

i. Formation of All-Pakistan Women's Association:

- APWA was founded by Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan in 1948, a famous activist for women's right, who had said that the role of women is no less

important than that of men.

- Initially APIAWA were formed to handle the refugee crisis in the newly independent Pakistan.

- Later on, it dealt with the promotion of moral, social, and economic welfare of the women of Pakistan in the wake of the second wave of feminism.

ii. Right to Own Agriculture Land: The West Pakistan Muslim Personal Law, Shariat Act 1962:

- It holds significance when it comes to inheritance of immovable property by women.

- It grants full access and control regarding ownership, acquisition, and disposal of property.

- Regardless of any custom or usage, this law applies to all cases related to succession, special property of females, marriage, divorce, dowry etc.

iii. United Front for Women's Right by Jahanara Shah Nawaz 1955:

- The focus of United front for

women rights is to provide a political party that includes women.

- Women cannot make decisions in issues that they are affected in without having enough numbers in decision-making.
- It addresses women's literacy, early marriage, and tokenism in Parliament, & the safety of women.

iv. Muslim Family Law Ordinance 1961:

- The law aimed to regulate family affairs by protecting women's rights.
- It was formed on marriage, children, custody, and divorce.
- It ensures that women are treated fairly.
- Islam also provides an explanation for the rights of partners in an Islamic marriage.

v. Creation of Women Action Forum:

- Under General Zia-ul-Haq's rule and Islamization of the nation-state, a group of women met in Shirkat Gah Karachi in 1981 and formed the

Women Action Forum.

- It challenge and protest the Hudood Ordinances of 1979.

- WIAF was the face of feminism in Pakistan in the 80s, with picketing demonstrations and processions.

vi. Karachi Business and Professional Women's Club:

- In 1954, the Karachi Business and Professional Women's Club was established to bring professional women together on a platform and later it established branches in Lahore, Peshawar, and Rawalpindi.

- Its aim to organize women in all parts of country to use their combined abilities and strength, to work for high standards of educational and intellectual attainments.

vii. Inception of Sindhiyani Tehreek by Women's wing:

- Sindhiyani Tehreek was launched in 1980 by rural women of Sindh province to fight the discriminatory

- laws against Zia's regime.
- The founding women were members of the ANAMI Tehreek.
 - It sought to create awareness about important issue among the two segments of society.
 - It aims, Sindhi nationalism and provincial autonomy, social class distinctions and conflict, patriarchy and subordination of women, the struggle for democracy.
 - It raised issues of Honor killing, Right to choice in marriage, Challenging Wadera Shahi, Women's share in property.
- viii. Pakistan become Signatory of CEDAW:
- The convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an international legal instrument that requires countries to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all areas and promotes women's and

girl's equal rights.

- Pakistan ratified CEDAW in 1996.
- CEDAW provides technical assistance and advisory services to the govt. of Pakistan, line ministries and other key departments on the implementation and monitoring of CEDAW.

vi

ix. Women's Quota in National Assembly Increased to 17%:

- The constitution of Pakistan reserved 10 seats for women for a period of ten years. In 1985, these seats were increased to 20.
- The military government of General Pervez Musharraf restored a lapsed constitutional quota for women's reserved seats in the assemblies through a series of reforms in 2000-2002.
- Enhanced quotas for women at National Assembly (17% or 60 seats) increased their political representation dramatically.

vii

X. Women's Protection Act 2006:

- It was passed by National Assembly of Pakistan on 15 Nov 2006 is an attempt to amend the heavily criticized 1979 Hudood Ordinance laws which govern the Punishment of rape and adultery in Pakistan.
- The object of this bill is to bring the laws relating to Zina and Qazaf in particular to provide relief and protection to women against misuse and abuse of law.
- WDA was said to invert the process known as "the Islamization of Penal law", however this legislation bears on only certain aspects of injustices and discrimination suffered by women.

xi. The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010:

- The (PAHWWA) was passed on 11 March 2010.
- This Act sets up the procedure

to file a complaint for sexual harassment in the workplace.

- The objective of the act is to create a safe working environment for women, which is free of harassment, abuse and intimidation with a view toward the fulfillment of their right to work with dignity.

xii. The National Commission on the Status of Women Act, 2012:

- NCSW Act 2012 - was passed by the Parliament to establish a statutory body with a broad mandate and powers to carry out inquiry of women's rights violations.
- The main objective of the Commission is the emancipation of women, equalization of opportunities and socio-economic conditions amongst women and men, and elimination of all sorts of discrimination against women.

xiii. Transgender Persons (Protection and Rights) Act 2018:

- The National Assembly of Pakistan enacted the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights), Act 2018 on 8th May 2018.
- The Act provides legal recognition to transgender persons and prohibits discrimination and harassment.
- It also places an obligation on local governments to provide for the welfare of the community.
- The law aims to legally recognise transgender people in the country.

xiv. Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2020:

- The Act provides for the protection of rights of ownership and possession of property by women, ensuring that such rights are not violated by means of harassment, coercion, force or fraud.
- The Act provides the due respect to the women in society.

xv. The Zainab Alert, Recovery and Response Act, 2020:

- The bill was passed by the Parliament in 2020.
- This Act was different in nature that it was brought in Parliament with the high aims to curb and control the child abuse incidents and as it is named as a Zainab Alert for recovery of missing, abducted, abused or kidnapped children in Pakistan.

xvi. The Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021:

- The Act was passed by the Parliament in 2021.
- It sought to set up special Courts and use modern devices during the investigation and trial of rape cases.
- The committee is also entitled to issue appropriate orders from time to time to Nadra to prepare a register of sex offenders,

details of which would be provided to a court of law or a law enforcement agency.

Conclusion:

- All these waves of feminism have imparted significant changes in Pakistan and created a more viable environment for gender mainstreaming.