

Q12. Believing in the statement that "women cover half the sky", do you think we need equal number of women in all spheres of public domain, especially in politics? (CSS-2018)

Q. Women need to be in leadership positions to pull more women into leadership roles. Is this suggestion that women need to "pull each other up" a useful one, or is

that inappropriate preferential treatment.
(CSS - 2020)

Ans I - INTRODUCTION: "WOMEN COVER HALF THE SKY", WE NEED EQUAL NUMBER OF WOMEN IN ALL SPHERES OF PUBLIC DOMAIN

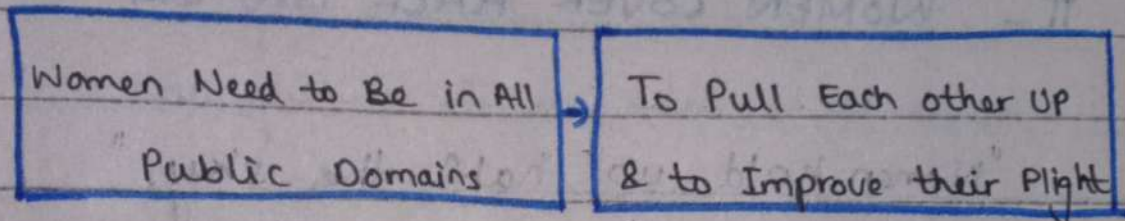


Figure 1: Need of Women in Public Domains

Women constitute slightly more than half of the world's population. Their participation in all public domains and especially in politics is compulsory for the development and progress of any country.

The statement "Women Cover Half the Sky" also indicates the significance of women's professionalism. In this context, the international community has also made a number of commitments, such as the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. Women's

political participation currently is quite low. Thus, there is a need to push women more into politics to improve the women's and the country's overall status. This can be done by the mutual cooperation of the government and the public.

II - "WOMEN COVER HALF THE SKY"

"Women hold up half the sky."
(Mao Zedong)

The above proclamation is made by the founder of the People's Republic of China (PRC), mainly to prove that women are a resource that ought to be deployed outside of the homes into the professional fields.

It is no denying the fact that women are under-represented in all spheres of public domains. ^{Especially,} The field of politics requires their more equitable representation worldwide to

accurately reflect the composition of society and to ensure that women's diverse interests are taken into account.

III - DO WOMEN NEED TO BE IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS?

"If you educate a man, you educate one person, if you educate a woman, you educate a nation."

In a similar manner of the significance of women's education, their leadership is also significant. Women need to be in all spheres of life i.e., medical, engineering, space, politics, etc. Female representatives not only advance women's rights, but also advance the rights of children. Eg. In Norway, a direct causal relationship between the presence of women in municipal councils and childcare coverage was found. Women's leadership position is also mandatory for the socio-economic development of a country.

E.g. In Rwanda, in 2019, they had the highest number of women in parliament (61.3% in lower house). Their GDP raised by 7.7% (highest in the world).

Similarly, research on panchayats (local councils) in India discovered that the number of drinking water projects in areas with women-led councils was 62% higher than those in men-led councils.

IV- THE CEDAW, THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND GENDER BALANCE

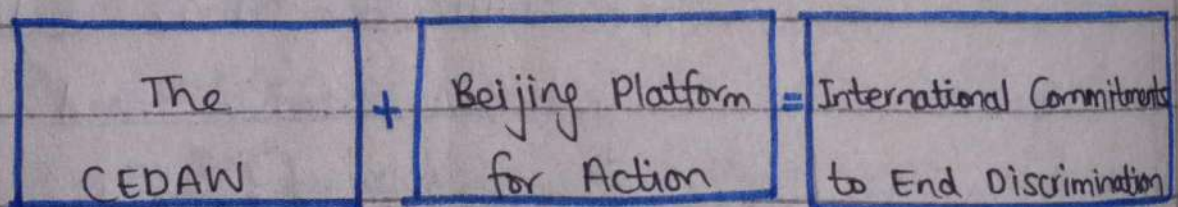


Figure 2: The CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action

The international community has made a number of commitments to rectify the under-representation of women in parliament. These commitments are:

a) CEDAW

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Constituted of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. Thus, the equal participation of women and men in public life is one of the cornerstones of CEDAW.

b) The Beijing Platform for Action

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995 is a visionary agenda for the empowerment of women. Inequality between men and women in positions of power and decision-making was one of the twelve key areas identified in the landmark Beijing Platform

for Action. Thus, Gender balance in political participation and decision-making is the internationally agreed target set in the Platform for Action.

IV - CURRENT STATUS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

a) Global Status

As of May, 2015, the proportion of women in parliaments around the world stood at 22.1% of the total number of parliamentarians globally. This is still falling short of the critical milestone of achieving a minimum of 30 per cent female representation in politics - the target which helps to ensure the presence of a critical mass of women in politics.

b) Pakistan's Status

In Pakistan, women constitute 48.54% of the population. Presently, there are 70 women in the National Assembly

(20% of the total seats). Similarly, there are 18 women senators (17% of the total seats). Currently, 223 women legislators in Pakistan do not conform to the Universal Standard of Critical Mass Theory i.e., at least 33% of women should be in politics.

V - NEED FOR WOMEN IN ALL SPHERES OF PUBLIC DOMAIN

a) To Discourage Patriarchy

The patriarchal norms confine women to homes and domestic tasks. Thus, the participation of women in public domains discourage such norms.

b) To Shift Gender Roles

Historically, women are assigned domestic and nurturing works, whereas men are meant to financially support the family. Women need to break this stereotype by effectively participating in public works.

c) To Set Role Models

The personalities of role models influence the youths, who are the futures of nations. Thus, women in dominant positions set role models for other girls.

d) To Improve Women's Status

Only women can understand the true plight of other women. Thus, the women parliamentarians play key roles in introducing laws to improve the status of women.

e) To Boost Economy

Currently, the women's domestic and reproductive labor do not contribute to economy and GDP of a country. The women have the potential to strengthen and boost the economy of any country, especially because of their hardworking nature.

f) To Strengthen Democracy

"For me, a better democracy is a democracy

where women do not only have the right to vote and to elect but to be elected."

(Michelle Bachelet)

Thus, women's participation in public domains strengthens democracy, too.

VI - HOW TO INCREASE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Following are some of the steps to be followed in order to ~~improve~~ increase women's participation:

1. Increase awareness among people through educational institutions, media and other platforms.
2. Encourage women education so that they may qualify the eligibility criteria to reach politics.
3. Generate more seats for women in parliament.
4. Finance women for their election campaigns.
5. Encourage and appreciate women to work and compete with men in all domains.

VII - CRITICAL ANALYSIS

According to Dr. Farzana Bari, women constitute slightly more than half of the world's population. Women are also ^{one of} the most deprived and oppressed communities, globally. One reason of their plight is the lack of their political participation. As of May, 2015, the proportion of women in parliaments around the world stood at 22.1% of the total number of parliamentarians globally (30% = minimum critical milestone for women's representation in politics). Pakistan also has no different statistics of women's political participation. Thus, in order to improve the socio-economic conditions of a country and to fully implement democracy, the women's

representation in politics need to be fully ensured.

VIII - CONCLUSION

To conclude, we need equal number of women in all spheres of public domain in order to improve women's status and the socio-economic status of the country. Their effective political participation is one of the key areas to improve their plight. Thus, the overall world and specifically Pakistan must work to push women more towards leadership roles.

Q13. Despite the entry of women legislators into politics on a 17 percent quota in national and provincial assemblies, still there are voices that "is Pakistan's Gender Quota in parliament showing results?" Rethink and discuss that how quotas can lead to political mainstreaming of women in Pakistan. (CSS-2021)

I- INTRODUCTION: RESULTS OF PAKISTAN'S GENDER QUOTA IN PARLIAMENT AND CHANNELING QUOTA TOWARDS POLITICAL MAINSTREAMING OF WOMEN

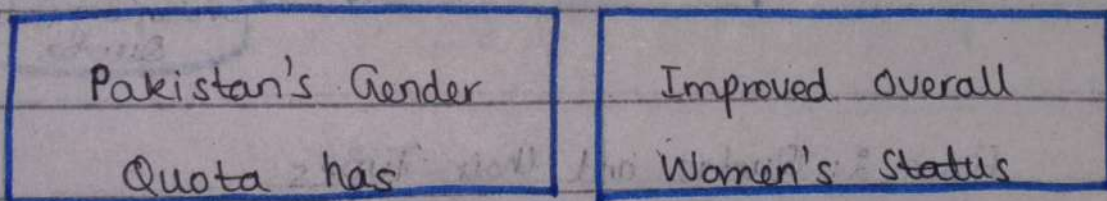


Figure 1: Impact of Political Quota in Pakistan

Pakistan has the legal quota system and it grants women 17% quota in the national and provincial assemblies and Senate. These quotas have ~~not~~ contributed much towards women empowerment and have

improved the overall status of women. Various governments like ^{that of} Benazir Bhutto, Pervaiz Musharraf and Imran Khan have worked on women's issues and ^{for} their empowerment. However, there are certain loopholes in the Pakistan's gender quota system which ~~lead~~ requires immediate measures in order to lead quotas toward political mainstreaming of women.

II - QUOTAS AND THEIR TYPES

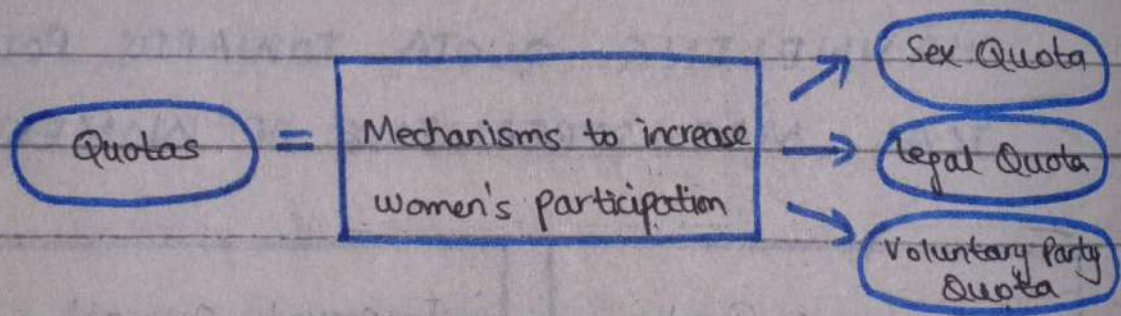


Figure 2: Quotas and their Types

a) Quotas

Popularly known as "Reservations", quotas are the mechanisms by which governments seek to increase the number of women represented in the governing body. Gender quotas for the election of legislators

have been used since the late 1970s by a few political parties in a small number of advanced and industrial democracies; like Germany and Norway. Currently, over 60% of countries have reached at least 10% of women in their national legislature, fewer have crossed the 20% and 30% barriers.

b) Types of Quotas

i) Sex Quota Systems

Sex quota systems institute a "critical value" below which is deemed an imbalanced government.

Example: 25% legislators, and 50% politicians, etc.

ii) Legal Quota Systems

Legal quota systems regulate the governance of political parties and bodies. Such quotas may be mandated by electoral law (Argentine quota law) or may be constitutionally required (as in Pakistan).

iii) Voluntary Party Quota Systems

Voluntary quotas are those adopted voluntarily by political parties and have no legal status. Individual parties may adopt a quota requiring that women comprise a certain proportion of candidates nominated or preselected to represent the party in an election.

III- QUOTA SYSTEM IN PAKISTAN

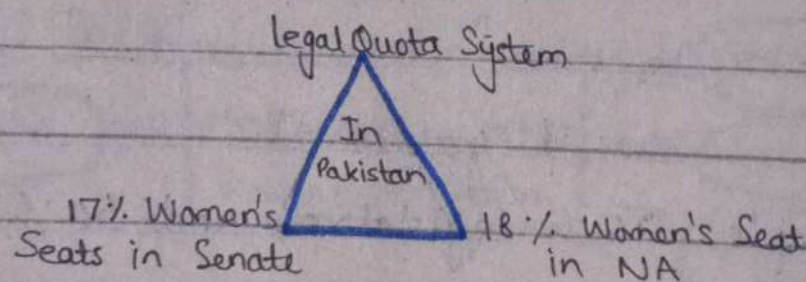


Figure 3: Quota System in Pakistan

a) Constitutional History of Quota

The 1956, 1962, 1970, 1973 and 1985 constitutional arrangements provided for reserved seats for women at both the provincial and national assemblies but of small magnitude, mostly 5% to 10% and through indirect elections by the members of the assembly

themselves.

b) Quota System Under Mucharraaf

In March 2000, the military government adopted a Devolution of Power Plan, which provided 33% quota for women in the districts, tehsils and the union councils. However, the same does not happen for women in the National and Provincial Assemblies and ⁱⁿ the Senate.

c) Existing Quotas in Pakistan

After much speculation and debate about what percentage government will come up with, the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) announced that 17 of the 100 seats in the Senate or 17% will be reserved for women and in the National Assembly, 60 of the ^{in NA} 342 seats (18%). The distribution is as follows: Punjab (35 seats); Sindh (14 seats); Khyber Pakhtun Khwa (8 seats) and Balochistan (3 seats). An additional 10 seats

are reserved for non-Muslims.

IV - RESULTS OF POLITICAL QUOTA FOR WOMEN IN DIFFERENT PERIODS

The global experience has shown that gender quotas alone cannot transform the quality of women's representation. However, in Pakistan, the gender quotas have contributed towards improvement of women's condition (despite many failures). Here is a glance of such improvements:

a) 1985 - 1990

There was a noticeable increase in women's political representation during this period. Benazir Bhutto became the first ^{women} Prime Minister and she established five Women's Studies Centers, the First Women Bank (to cater women's financial needs). She also reserved a 5% quota for women in public sector jobs.

b) 1990 - 2002

After 1990, the momentum of women's active political participation and the introduction of women friendly laws disrupted. This pace remained until 2002.

c) 2002 - 2007

In 2002, the number of women on general seats was 13. Despite accounting for 22% of the federal parliament, women could not achieve much in terms of law-making except the Women's Protection Act, during this period.

d) 2008 - 2013

In 2008, a comprehensive initiative to promote the role of women in parliament was the introduction of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (2008). They introduced the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, the Benazir Income Support Programme Act, the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Act, etc. Despite these legislatures, they also advocated

for women IDP after military operations in Swat, gender responsive relief efforts and others.

e) 2013-2018

In 2013, only eight women won the National Assembly seats. The Punjab Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) during this period, started various schemes for women empowerment and protection, such as ^{the} Women on Wheels initiatives ^{and} the establishment of violence against women centers.

f) 2018-2022

Empowering women was in the manifesto of the PTI's government. During this period, the women parliamentarians headed certain ministries including Dr. Shireen Rehman, Dr. Fehmida Mirza and others. Pakistan Army also got its first female three-star General (Lt. General Nigar Johar) and the first female judge of the Supreme Court in

Pakistan's history - Justice Ayesha A. Malik, during this tenure.

g) Current Status

Pakistan now has four provincial WPCs in addition to a federal one, the first initiative of its kind in South Asia. Today, 85 women parliamentarians and around 130 women MPAs from more than 20 political parties are working for women empowerment and for introducing women friendly laws.

V - STEPS TO DIRECT QUOTAS TOWARD POLITICAL MAINSTREAMING OF WOMEN IN PAKISTAN

a) Educate Women

The education sectors of Pakistan shows a bleak picture - women literacy rate is 48%. (2022). By educating women, we can make women eligible to access the political grounds.

b) Design a Framework to Address Barriers

For women's full and equal participation in decision-making structures and processes at all levels of governance to be attained, a strategic framework should be designed to overcome the barriers — patriarchy, gender roles, etc.

c) Try to Reach the 30% Women Parliamentarians Target

As of May, 2015, the proportion of women in parliaments around the world stood at 22.1%. This falls short of the target to ensure the presence of a critical mass of women in politics i.e. 30%. Thus, steps are required to meet the 30% target.

d) Attain a Consensus among Women Parliamentarians

Efforts are required to attain a broad-based consensus among all female parliamentarians on an agreed agenda for

women's development, empowerment and emancipation.

e) Enhance the Role and Power of Women Parliamentarians

The government should enhance the role ^{and power} of female parliamentarians in proposing gender-sensitive legislation, and reviewing and amending discriminatory laws and policies.

f) Encourage Governments to Build their own Caucuses

The government should take initiative to encourage local and state governments to build their own respective caucuses, in order that they should work for women.

g) Ensure all People to Vote

The government should accelerate attempts to ensure that all people vote, especially women, by recognizing and responding

to issues keeping women from voting.

VI - CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Women are one of the most deprived and oppressed communities. Their voices have always been suppressed. The inclusion of them in politics and parliament is an approach to empower them. Pakistan, in this regard, has set 17 per-cent quota in the national and provincial assemblies for women. This has contributed great in empowering women, despite the fact that it has many loopholes and cases like Noor Mugaddam and Dua Zahra exist. The Pakistani government, the women politicians, the men and women must all contribute to improve the status of women in Pakistan.

VII - CONCLUSION

To sum-up, Pakistan has set 17 percent quota for women in the parliament. This has greatly improved the overall status of women. The legal quota system

in Pakistan has also assigned key positions to women. However, there are still needs to further improve the gender quota system in Pakistan.