

Women in Power Structures of Pakistan: Presence, Impact, and Limitations

Thesis Statement:

Women's growing presence in Pakistan's power structures has produced meaningful policy, legal, and administrative outcomes. However, entrenched patriarchy and institutional barriers continue to limit their substantive influence.

Outline:

- I- Introduction
- II- Presence of Women in the Power Sectors of Pakistan:
 - 1- Reserved seats for women in national and provincial assemblies
 - 2- Women quota in the local government system ensuring grassroots political participation

3- Women holding high level Political offices

- i) Benazir Bhutto as the first Prime Minister of Pakistan
- ii) Maryam Nawaz as Chief Minister of Punjab

4- Participation of women in the Judicial system of Pakistan

- 1) Justice Ayesha Malik as the first female judge of Supreme Court

5- Inclusion of women in Armed forces of Pakistan

- i) Lt. General Nigar Johar as the first female three star general

III- Impacts of the Presence of Women in the Power Sectors of Pakistan:

- 1- Gender sensitive Policy frameworks Shaped by women's perspectives

i) Dhee Rani Program for respectful weddings of female

ii) Aghosh Program for improving maternal and new-born health

2- Legislative protection strengthened through women's advocacy

i) Domestic Violence Bill 2025 to ensure the social protection of women and children

ii) Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act, 2011 to combat acid crimes against women

3- Health Priorities redirecting towards maternal well-being

4- Contribution of female bureaucrats in facilitating women

i) Online police station initiative in Islamabad to provide faster law enforcement

ii) Pink buses with women drivers for safe transport

5- Women Judges introducing gender

Sensitivity and legal interpretation

- i) Justice Ayesha Malik declaration of the two-finger virginity test as unconstitutional

6- Female diplomats shaping Pakistan's international image

- i) Ambassador Malika Lohi's role in international diplomacy

IV- Limitations in the Presence of Women in the Power sector of Pakistan

1- Tokenistic nature of women's inclusion in political arenas

- i) Inter-Parliamentary Union Ranking Pakistan 150/190 countries indicating challenges to women's political participation

2- Resistance faced by women's legislature on gender specific issues

- i) Backlash against the women Protection violence act (2016) in KPK.

3- Limited number of women

Teaching BPS-21/22 positions

4- Online harassment targeting women holding key positions

i) Shehribano Naqvi facing cyber bullying after a public podcast

5- Fragmented influence of women across ideological lines

V- Way forward to enhance women's presence by removing limitations in the Power Sector of Pakistan

1- Assign executive authority to female ministers instead of increasing seats.

2- Establish dedicated FIA cyber harassment cells with mandatory time-bound disposal cases involving women in Public office

3- Appoint gender ambassadors in assemblies and Civil Services.

VI Conclusion

• Fragmented influence across
the ideological spectrum of women

