

Can laws alone protect women in Pakistan?

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The Essay

Great ideas only become great when they are transformed into majestic measures from human mind to ground. Similarly laws on a paper are different from their enforcement on the field. In Pakistan same case is present. For this reason laws remain unimplemented and they are unable to protect women in Pakistan. Although, proper measures are present but women are always at risk in Pakistan. Women in Pakistan are serving in different sectors for prosperity of the nation.

But they face difficulties to perform their duties efficiently. Constitution in Pakistan holds a central position. This constitution is always ready to defend or to protect females of the country. But laws of constitution of Pakistan have ceremonial role to protect women. There are many laws present such as women protection act and many others. But still females are not safe. This essay will discuss that laws alone cannot protect females in Pakistan. Because in Pakistan laws are only present in files they are not practiced at ground level.

First of all, despite a bunch of laws is present but Pakistan always secure poor global rankings in gender gap index. Gender gap index stands for gender inequality in a society. It is used to identify the strength of females in a

society. Pakistan has half of females population but gender discrimination is also at peak. For example according to global gender gap index report 2025 by UN, Pakistan is at last which is 148 out of 148. This ranking indicates that Pakistan has no active measures to reduce gender gap. So, laws cannot alone protect women in Pakistan.

Secondly, informal justice systems dominate over formal laws in Pakistan which hinder protection of females. Informal justice system stands for tribal and jirga system where some known persons of a territory decide everything. These tribes and jirgas consider themselves right and make decisions based on their rationale which may negate the laws. For instance, jirga in Balochistan gave order of honour killing of a female along ^{with} her husband. This incident is a true picture of dominant tribes which do not even know the basis of

constitution and consider females as culprits. Hence, due to informal justice systems in Pakistan, laws alone are unable to protect females.

Thirdly, family pressures prevail in Pakistan which reduce significance of laws. In Pakistan family system exists, where no one has right to raise voice against elder siblings and parents as well. Elders pressurize young ones to obey them and forget own desires. For instance girls are forced to do marriages without their consent. Similarly, when it comes to distribution of father's property, brothers always do unfair distribution among sisters. This unfair distribution among females emphasize that women do not have equal property rights which ~~are~~ have been given by shariah. Therefore, due to family pressures, laws cannot alone protect females in Pakistan.

Fourthly, women are unsafe at work places despite

protection acts are present in Pakistan. Workplaces mostly include offices, hospitals and different job places. Many females are also working in drama and film industry of the country which are also not safe. For example a famous actress Misha shafi filed a case against colleague actor Ali zaifar for harassment. This case shows women which are talented and aware of protection laws, but still are unable to protect them. In short, despite strict laws are present, women are unsafe, ^{which} indicates alone laws are unable to protect them.

Moreover, 25-A article of the constitution of the Pakistan indicates that getting education is right of every girl and boy of the state. But females in Pakistan do not have equal opportunities of education. Females in Pakistan are only considered as homemakers. Sometimes they face financial and moral support difficulties. They

remain unable to complete education. For instance in rural areas females are not allowed to go to schools. Sometimes due to more distance girls are unable to attend classes. Similarly, due to forced marriages at early ages hinder the educational process for females. ~~That's why~~ Hence, despite 25-A, females cannot get education. Indicate laws alone cannot protect females in Pakistan.

Furthermore, article 10-A is present in constitution which gives right of fair trial to every one, but women of Pakistan cannot enjoy this right. Fair trial is a process which consists of many steps of examinations, forensics and verbal investigations which enhances efficiency of justice. But right of fair trial is not given to women in Pakistan and justice is delayed. For example in rape cases, no fair trials are done and courts make decisions on the basis

of initial findings and investigations. Similarly in many other cases related to females, FIRs are not registered as early as possible. It is done only to suppress voice of females. Hence, laws cannot alone protect women in Pakistan, although, article 10 remains fail to give right of fair trial to females.

Moreover, there are many punitive measures are present in Pakistan but women are not safe. Punitive measures stand for strict punishments against violence. They prevent any crime in a society. But in Pakistan these punitive measures are not safeguard. For instance during motorway incident a women was raped by a gang. she was travelling from sialkot to Lahore with her children. This horrible incident shows responsiveness of motorway police which is supposed to patrol and enforce laws for protection of females. Moreover, laws were present but remained

unimplemented. Hence, only laws in files are insufficient to protect females in Pakistan.

In addition delayed justice undermines the significance of laws in Pakistan. Delayed justice means prolonged hearings and pending dates by courts. Laws only become effective when they serve speedy justice. In Pakistan due to delayed justice women are not safe. This act encourages more criminals to threaten females. For example in Noor Mahaddam murder case ~~the~~ her murderer, Zahir Jaffer has been given punishment after many years. During this time many other girls have become victims of rape and target killing. Delayed justice means only to deny justice. So, delayed justice reduces significance laws in Pakistan and they are unable to protect females.

Moreover, labour rights are present in Pakistan but women earn less as compared to

men but they contribute equally. Labour rights ensure proper wage to a labourer according to work. But in Pakistan females are discouraged to demand their proper wages. For example in agricultural sector women help their men but in return get low income. Women work all day in farms and do cutting and also run tube wells. But they ~~do not~~ do not get fruit. Hence, despite labour rights women get low wages in Pakistan.

Besides these, due to patriarchal dominance women are not safe in Pakistan's power structures. Power structures are basically politics, civil services, education and health sectors. Women who hold high positions they always face criticism from males specially. For example first prime minister of Pakistan ~~Benazir Bhutto~~ Benazir Bhutto always faced criticism from opposition parties. She became also victim of character assassination. Similarly chief minister of Punjab Maryam

Nawaz also suffer from similar situation. She has been criticised even for good measures as well. Males politicians always find ~~happiness~~ happiness to assassinate their opponent females. Therefore, due to male dominance in power structures of Pakistan women are not protected.

Additionally disgusting police attitude hinders law enforcement in Pakistan. Police institution is considered to be main law enforcement agency. Usually in females cases police ~~blames~~ blames females victims. For instance in case of dua-e-zahra police blamed girl to move away from her home. Even police did not pay attention to her parents requests. This happening raised many questions about legacy of law ~~enforcement~~ enforcement agencies. Blaming females for such happenings erodes public trust also and parents consider their daughters are not safe yet many laws are present. So, disgusting police attitude

hinder law enforcement in the Pakistan.

Furthermore, cultural norms suppress laws supremacy in Pakistan. Cultural norms are those values which has to be followed by everyone in a particular society under specific conditions. But in Pakistan cultural norms are only for daughters. These norms put females in useless corner of a society. For instance in Pakistan young medicine graduates are not allowed to do practice. Doctors have very strict routine. They can be called anytime in emergency. Some in-laws due to norms do not give permission to their daughter in laws to do jobs. At end they only become house wives. In short, cultural norms suppress supremacy of the constitution in Pakistan.

Last but not least elite influence also hinders law enforcement in Pakistan. Elites only want to protect their own interests. They want to hide their

crimes. They present wrong facts of the crimes to prove them innocent. For instance in Mukhtaar Mai case local ^{elites} influenced the case handlers only to suppress the victim and their own act. But this act of influence causes loss of strict punishments ^{laws} enforcement. Therefore, elites influence in Pakistan hinders enforcement of laws.

There is a brief way forward to make laws more powerful to protect females in Pakistan.

First of all legislation should be done to strengthen women in power structures of Pakistan. When women become more strong they feel safe. For example, parliament of Rwanda has more representation of women. Women make powerful legislation for their protection. Hence through legislative women can be strengthened in power structures of Pakistan.

Secondly, educational measures should be introduced to make females more aware of their rights. Women understand better laws of their protection by getting knowledge. For example Bangladesh has introduced model for girls education to give education to maximum females which give country many benefits.

Thirdly, legal framework for rape cases should be ~~encouraged~~ designed to protect daughters of nation. For instance in Saudi Arabia punishment of rape is hanging. Rape cases has been reduced in Saudi Arabia. Hence, through legal framework women can be protected in Pakistan.

In a nutshell laws cannot alone protect females in Pakistan. Because due to strict laws global gender gap index of Pakistan is the lowest, informal justice systems dominance, family pressures, no safety at workplaces unequal opportunities of education,

no right of fair trial, punitive measures are unable to protect women and delayed justice undermines significance of laws. Moreover, women get low wages, patriarchal dominance in power structures, disgusting police attitudes, cultural norms suppress laws significance and elite influence hinders law enforcement. So, laws alone cannot protect women in Pakistan.