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Essay - 01

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

Outline

I. Introduction

The share of women in power structure of Pakistan has increased with their visible presence and its progressive impacts are visible. However, certain factors limiting it to be significant enough.

II. Understanding the Power Structure of Pakistan

(Legislature, Executive, Judiciary, Bureaucracy, Civil Society, etc)

III. Overview: a cursory glance at the Women in Power Structure of Pakistan

IV. Presence of Women in Power Structure of Pakistan:

a) Presence in Political Power Structure

(221 members of Parliaments, Senators, and Provincial Assemblies across Pakistan)

b) Presence in the echelons of Governance

(CM of the largest Province; Federal and Provincial Secretaries; DCs, DPOs, etc)

c) Presence in the power corridors of Judiciary

(Justice Ayesha Malik and Justice Mussarat Hilali in Supreme Court; Justice Atalia Neelum Chief Justice of Lahore High Court)

d) Presence in the Pressure groups

(Civil Societies; Lawyers association; Bar Associations)

V. Impacts of Women in Power Structure of Pakistan:

a) Increased legislations on Women and Gender Sensitive Issues

(Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010; Anti-Honor Killing and Anti-Rape Laws; Domestic Violence Act; National Commission on the Status of Women Act, 2012)

b) Breaking the notion of Glass-Ceiling

(Women are being considered equally capable for administration and good Governance)

c) Protection of legal rights of the women

(Justice Ayesha Two-fingers test's judgement; Justice Musarat Hilali rulings for protection of women in Jirga decisions and informal Justice System of KPK; Justice Tahira Saifdar ensured inheritance rights of women in Balochistan)

d) Changing perceptions about Women in the society

(Women - no more the name of frailty) (48% allocation in CSS - 2024 for Women)

VI. Limitations for Women in Power Structure of Pakistan:

a) Deeply Entrenched Patriarchy in Power structure of Pakistan (Leaders of Political Parties; Top Positions)

b) Tokenism and Quota Dependency (Only 12 out of 272 general elections seats won by Women)

c) Gendered Harassment and Political Violence

(Hostile Environment; Character Assassinations)

d) Socio-Cultural and Care Economy Burdens

(Widespread poverty, and illiteracy; Role of Women as Mother)

VII. Some Pragmatic Measures to reduce these limitations

VIII. Conclusion

Essay:

Women constitute almost fifty percent population of every country, and no country can really develop unless half of its population-women-are involved. Every developed and developing ^{country} acknowledge this fact and is trying to integrate its women in the socio-economic and political fabrics of the country. Pakistan being no exception also accepted this reality and made progressive steps across the time to empower its women. These efforts bear fruits and Pakistani Women started integrating in the power structure of Pakistan. They are now chief executive of the largest province, they are elected into Supreme Court, they are Chief Justices of High Courts, Federal and Provincial Secretaries, Commissioners of Divisions and Heads of different departments. There is a significant number of female parliamentarians in the Legislators. This increased role

of Women in the power structure of Pakistan has progressive impacts. There are increased legislations and remarkable legal judgements to protect the rights of women. However, despite the increased share of women in power structure of Pakistan, and its positive impacts, there are certain limitations which are limiting their role to be significant enough. This essay will discuss the presence of women in the power structure of Pakistan, its impacts and limitations; and a brief paragraph to address these limitations with pragmatic measures.