

WOMEN LEGISLATORS AND THEIR INTERESTS IN POLICY MAKING IN PAKISTAN: A STUDY OF PRIVATE MEMBERS BILLS PRESENTED IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DURING 2010-15

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Abstract

Ever since the increase in the number of women representatives in Pakistan's legislature through reserved seats is made, gender politics has taken a lot of significance in the political landscape of Pakistan. Women thus entering in legislative institutions are expected, of course, to voice and advance issues relevant to women, family and children, i.e. pursue the traditional gender agenda. At the same time, they are expected to include gender perspective while addressing other public issues of mainstream politics. This paper seeks to answer the question as which areas of interests and priorities women representatives in the National Assembly of Pakistan have highlighted in policy output, and to what extent they raised the issues pertaining to public issues and mainstream politics. Private Members Bills presented by the women representatives in National Assembly of Pakistan during 2010-15 were examined. Performance of women representatives was found phenomenal and not limited to raising issues of women, children and marginalized segments of the society. Rather, activities of women legislators reflected a much broader variety of interests, and not simply limited to those areas traditionally thought to be of women's interest.

Key words

Women, Interests, Policy output, National Assembly, Private Member Bills,

Introduction

Representation of women in political institutions and their role in decision-making has come to be important; some writers have justified it in terms of "justice, legitimacy, responsiveness and effectiveness"¹. The struggle for achieving due representation of women in the power structures gained momentum in the early 20th century. In 1995, the UN 4th World Conference on Women held at Beijing became a turning point as far as the realization of women's presence in power corridors is concerned. The Beijing Platform called

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for 30 percent increase in the number of women serving at legislative institutions in decision-making

roles upto the next two decades². Since that call for action, a good number of countries around the globe have made significant progress for women's inclusion into decision-making roles in the legislative institutions, thus satisfying to some extent the major recommendations of the Beijing Conference. Women representation in parliaments around the world has increased from the meager 10.9 percent in 1975³ to a better – but yet modest – 23.6 percent in 2018⁴.

In Pakistan, efforts were made to address the issue in the form of National Plan of Action for Women (1988) and “National Policy for Development & Empowerment of Women” (2002). However, Devolution Plan 2000 became turning point with regard to significant increase in women's seats in all tiers of government. The last 15 years have witnessed significant developments in terms of women's political participation. Substantial reservation of women seats in all tiers of legislatures together with a good number of women winning on general seats have increased the overall proportion of women's representation in the legislatures. Such increase has been from a meager 1.4% (11 against a total of 787) during the period 1997-99⁵ to an impressive 19.5% (228 against a total of 1170) in 2013 elections.

Research has shown that electing significant numbers of women to parliament enables them to reflect the interests, needs, and rights of women in public policy making⁶. While keeping Pakistan in focus, scholars argued that women has achieved leadership roles and prominent place in the legislative institutions subsequent to substantial increase of women seats under quota system which enabled them to advocate gender based legislative agenda and make their presence felt by making alliances and caucuses.⁷

This paper aims to explore interests of women representatives in National Assembly of Pakistan towards policy output. Since study is focused on policy output, legislative interventions made by the women representatives while sponsoring Private Members Bill during 2010-15 were examined to find out the diversity of their interests ranging from advancing gender agenda and responding to mainstream politics. Data was collected from the National Assembly. Debates were extensively explored besides consulting reports published by the think tanks, National Assembly Secretariat and non government organizations. While adjudging women interests in traditional arena, bills pertaining to women's rights, children and family, healthcare, education, social welfare, human rights and bills protecting the rights of under privileged segments of the society were considered. Bills sponsored by women

other than these areas provided an understanding of their interest and priorities other than gender specific issues.

Women's Political Representation

A number of scholars have undertaken research work on women's representation in politics and their interests, prominent amongst them include Hanna Pitkin (1967), Kanter (1977), Phillip Maxine Molyneus, Dodson, Carroll, O'Regan, Lena Wangnerud, and Williams. The sojourn of research work carried out by these scholars is given in the literature review of this article.

Hanna Pitkin (1967) can rightly be credited for pioneering the literature on political representation. She conceptualized the term representation as simply to "make present again"⁸. Pitkin further explained the concept bifurcating systematically between various shades of representation by alluding 'acting for' (substantive representation) or "standing for" (descriptive, formal and symbolic representation). Carrying forward the work of Pitkin, Kurebwa posited that political representation is the movement of making citizen's opinion, voices, and perspectives 'present in the public policy making process'⁹.

A threshold effect was postulated by Kanter (1977)¹⁰ in contrast to a linear relationship between the production of women-oriented policies vis-à-vis proportion of female representatives¹¹. Kanter advocated for attaining a critical mass in the women representation for policy responsiveness in legislature. The "Critical Mass" theory posited that women were not likely to impact legislative outcomes if their representation remains a token one. On the other hand, there had to be a considerable minority of a legislators in order to make an impact. The reasoning was that as the number increased, they could work more effectively together in bringing about women friendly policies. Not only that, they would be more able to influence their male colleagues to accept and approve bills envisaged to promote women's concerns.

The concept of "Critical Mass" gained wide currency among the scholars as a reasonable threshold of women in legislative institutions to bring change in policy agenda in favour of women. However, the concept was contested by a good deal of scholars on the grounds that increased number of women in legislatures is certainly essential but not a sole criteria to advance women's interests in policy making as there are several other factors involved like individual attributes of women legislators and institutional arrangements and factors. In contrast to Kanter's view, scholars argued that at times women in minority can even change the policy agenda to include

women's interest¹². Moreover, relying merely upon head count is not justified as gender identity and part affiliation are also crucial to determine women's role in shaping policy agenda.

Dahlerup (1988) fostered an explicitly gendered based viewpoint which focuses how the minority status of women in politics impact their minority group status in terms of "sexual harassment, over accommodation, stereotyping, absence of legitimate authority, and lack of consideration for family obligations". The enumerated factors are accumulative results of minority position of women along with the emasculated status of women in the patriarchal nature of the society. Dahlerup's incisive discourse on Nordic women legislature brought to the fore fact that attainment of critical mass in representation had significant impact on power, policy, social climate of political life, political discourse, and performance of women. She posited a threshold of 30% for women in any organization to bring a qualitative shift, hence signifying the shift from a small to a large minority¹³.

While many of the scholars have been proponents of the attaining Critical Mass for advocating women's' interests, Phillips (1995), has not been very enthusiastic about critical mass, rather she has contested the notion on the ground that attaining critical mass may not be an optimal condition for advocating women role in politics. While acknowledging the specific life experiences necessitating women representation for promoting gender interest, she rejects the notion of universalized interests and needs of women. She asserts:

*"Women have distinct interests in relation to child-bearing (for any foreseeable future, an exclusively female affair); and as society is currently constituted they also have particular interests arising from their exposure to sexual harassment and violence, their unequal position in the division of paid and unpaid labor and their exclusion from most arenas of economic or political power."*¹⁴(Phillips, 1995, pp. 67-68)".

Based on the empirical research in the realm of critical mass, women's representation and women's interest, a threefold approach for advocating women's interest has been developed. These gender based interests, derived from the discourse of women's subordination and formulation of alternative are called as the 'strategic gender interests'. First, among the elucidated approach is focused on operationalizing or defining the issues related to exclusive private issues. These issues pertain to the sexuality, body and the right to give birth. Women's position in public domain, intertwined with the first issue occupies the second position. This notional issue of public domain encompassing the

domain of labor force and welfare state, has been labeled by Molyneux as 'practical gender interests' which arises from the positioning of women with the gender division of labor¹⁵. The third factor, having a feminist motive has been elucidated as women's quest for overcoming discrimination and achieving equality and autonomy, both in public as well as private spheres of interests.

The practical and strategic interests have been combined in most of the studies on political representation of women. Towards this end, Dodson and Carroll (1995)¹⁶ operationalized women's role in legislation as part of 'women right bills' that impact directly on women or having a feminist undertone. Whereas laws pertaining women's traditional sphere of interest' that impinges on the role of women as 'dispensers of care' both within the family as well as in the society. Moreover, it also has an impact on other thematic areas such as education and health care.

O'Regan (2000)¹⁷ has carried out comparative research in industrialized nations. In her work, she has laid emphasis on 'salary protection' and social policy. The cardinal aspects of salary protection include; policy regarding maternity leave, the right to have equal pay, child care policy and policy on equal job opportunity. The salient of social policy include; the right of marriage and divorce, children guardian ship, sexual abuse, domestic violence, the legislations regarding the choice of abortion and access to education.

The work of Lena Wängnerud is directed towards establishing a linkage between women representation and autonomy. Carrying forward her arguments, she postulates women's representation consisting of three cardinals; the acknowledgment of power disequilibrium between both the genders, policy formulation aimed at emancipating the autonomy of female gender and the foremost being their recognition as a social category Wängnerud (2000)¹⁸.

The attribute of social position of women indicate that the marginalization of women, owing to structural and cultural barriers leads to universal marginalization of women. Towards this end, Williams assert that making women's voice heard in the political decision making process is directly women's representation¹⁹. Women's representation therefore not only affect the policy formulation for the marginalized group, but also impact the mindset of the dominant groups.

The survey conducted by Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 2008; Equality in Politics: A Survey of Women and Men in Parliaments, the fact came to the fore that women parliamentarian were most ardent supporters of the women's cause. Women's concerns and perspectives were prominent factors in the legislations introduced by

these representatives. Women parliamentarian from across the globe were found to be torch bearers to combat gender based violence, a rampant evil, found in many societies across the world. Anders B. Johnsson, the Secretary General remarked in the forward to the IPU emphasized on the inclusion of women in parliament. While reiterating the need for women in parliament, he stated that inclusion of women in parliament is not only about granting them their due rights of equality and participation in the matters of public affairs, it is more about capitalizing on the huge potential of the women to determine developmental and political priorities for the benefit of the society and global community at large, hence, “*it is not just a matter of right, but getting it right*”²⁰.

Expounding on women’s political representation²¹, asserted that women’s political representation distinguish women’s issues exclusively from women’s lens. Carrying forward the point, Markuham, propound women issues to be those issues which impinges primarily women, be it physical concerns like reproductive rights and breast cancer screening; or social concerns encompassing gender equality and childcare policy, whereas women’s perspectives are women’s views on a broad range of mainstream politics.

Two dimensions have been identified while operationalizing substantive representation in legislature; (a) *process* — interventions made on behalf of constituents, and (b) *outcomes* — legislation and policies²². Women’s substantive representation, hence, entails legislative interventions and outcomes that favor women. An intervention and legislation is considered *pro-women* if it relates to (i) improving women’s status and rights, their access to resources, or enhancing their safety with regard to issue areas that disproportionately affect them directly or indirectly, and (ii) affirmative action policies to enhance women’s descriptive representation in public and political office²³. Three areas have been identified by the extant literature disproportionately impinging upon women. These areas include;

- (1) **Women’s traditional interests:** impacting the domestic concerns of the women in the domain of reproduction, childcare, nurturance, and education²⁴.
- (2) **Women’s civic worker function:** This includes education, public health and;
- (3) **Personal forms of coercion and violence:** The vulnerabilities of women to personal intimidation and violence, such as rape, domestic abuse and sexual harassment²⁵.

Women’s interest in typical feminist issues notwithstanding, women’s inclination and purposeful interest in peace and conflict resolution has also been debated and acknowledged by scholars. Female status in the society is said to be corroborated by their experience in conflict. Towards this end, paragraph 135 of the Beijing Platform for Action denotes “while entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict and terrorism, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex”. The gender biases, status disparities and discriminations during peace time are exacerbated during the conflict. The lack of women participation in the decisions making process, will accentuate their absence from decision making process during the conflict or post conflict peace process²⁶. The proponents of women’s participation in decision making posit that “when women influence decisions about war and peace and take the lead against extremism in their communities, it is more likely that crises will be resolved without resource to violence”²⁷.

Women Legislators in Pakistan

Pakistan emerged as a prominent country amongst those who responded promptly to Beijing forum’s call with regard to women's representation in the legislature. The last 15 years have witnessed significant developments in terms of women’s political participation which has increased in legislative bodies since 2002. The representation of women in the National Assembly increased from 2-3% to 22% after introduction of gender quota i.e. 60 reserved legislative seats for women in the 342-member National Assembly (Lower House). Reserved seats are allocated to political parties against a proportionate ratio to the number of seats they win in the parliament; the parties then control appointments for these seats. The reservation was in accordance with the Article 34 of the Constitution and in fulfillment of Pakistan's international commitments to women's emancipation. Since the introduction of this quota, the legislative agenda has expanded to include women’s issues and concerns in public policy.

Table 1: Representation of Women in National Assembly of Pakistan

Legislat ure	Time Period	Total Seats	Seats held by Women			
			General Election	Reserved Seats	Total / Percentage	
1 st	Aug 47- Oct 54	30	2	-	2	6.7%

2 nd	May 55- Oct 1958	80	-	-	0	0%
3 rd	June 62- June 65	156	6	-	6	3.8%
4 th	Jun 65- March 69	156	6	-	6	3.8%
5 th	April 72, Jan 77	144	6	-	6	4.2%
6 th	Mar 77- Jul 77	210	1	10	11	5.2%
7 th	Mar 85 May 88	217	1	21	22	10.1%
8 th	Nov 88- Aug 90	217	4	22	26	11.1%
9 th	Nov 90- Jul 93	217	2	-	2	0.9%
10 th	Oct 93- Nov 96	217	4	-	4	1.8%
11 th	Feb 97- Oct 99	217	6	-	6	2.8%
12 th	Nov 2002- 2007	342	13	61	74	21.64%
13 th	Mar2008- March13	342	16	60	76	22.22%
14 th	May 13- Mar 2018	342	10	60	70	20.46%

Source: www.na.gov.pk and compiled by author

Struggle of Pakistani women for their political rights and citizenship can be traced back to colonial regime. In spite of the fact that, they actively participated in independence movement to get rid of British rule, just two were able to make their entrance possible in Pakistan's first constituent assembly. However, when the embryonic phase of new state was over, women were restrained to their homes²⁸. Post-independence, advocacy of women's rights remained limited to a minor fraction of women from the elite class. Nevertheless, outside parliament, their first achievement came when some items of charter of women's rights were incorporated into the 1956 Constitution. In 1961, Family Laws were passed to regulate marriage and divorce. The Muslim Family Laws Ordinance (MFLO) 1961 was the landmark legislation which legitimized women's rights and empowerment.

Earlier, in pre independence regime, the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act 1937 was the foundational law. The 1961 Marriage Law was an important and comprehensive legislation to safeguard women's

interest. Under this law it was given that a spouse could utilize his right to divorce subject to the Court's consent only. The 1973 Constitution also safeguarded the rights of women's participation in the areas of political and socio economical fields, thus paved their way to government posts and service.

However, promulgation of Hudood Ordinance in the 1980's reverted the scenario. This legislation received criticism from advocates of women's rights owing to not properly differentiating adultery from rape and its unfair enforcement against women. Pakistan also witnessed revival of democratic regime during 1988-2000. During later part of 1980s decade, Mutarhama Benazir Bhutto assumed the portfolio of the first female Prime Minister, and appeared as a symbol of hope for Pakistani women at large to participate more and more in the country's public office to women with political support. Notwithstanding, this did not occur²⁹.

In 2002, mandatory women quotas were introduced being part of governance reforms ; 33% seats reserved for women at the local level, while 17% in both houses of the parliament. The implementation of quotas was a positive step towards direction of women's empowerment in Pakistan as earlier women legislators were accounted for not more than 3% of the total representatives.

Context for Legislation During the Study Period

During the study period 2010-15, which constituted the last three years of 13th National Assembly and the first two parliamentary years of 14 National Assembly with Pakistan Peoples Party and PML (N) holding the reins of government in centre respectively, women's overall status in society, political scenario, democratic and parliamentary context and public issues provided a complex canvas to women representatives to set their priorities while making legislative interventions towards policy output.

Women constitute 48.76% of the total population of Pakistan³⁰. There is considerable diversity in overall women's status across classes, regions, and the rural/urban divide due to unequal socioeconomic development wherein patriarchal forces have a deep impact on women's lives.

According to Pakistan's Economic Survey 2014-15, only 22% of women are employed. Majority lack opportunities due to cultural, social and religious constraints primarily ingrained in patriarchal mind-sets. Harassment, honour killings, forced marriages, acid attacks, rape and domestic violence incidents present a hostile scenario for women in general. Pakistan secured 147 position on the Gender

Development Index as rated by The Human Development Report (2015) **owing to considerable increase in women rights violations.**

Early marriages of girls, excessive childbearing and a high illiteracy rate adversely affect women's health. Maternal mortality rate is 178 deaths/ 100,000 live births³¹. Despite having legal rights to own and inherit property from their families, women's access and control over these resources was an unwelcoming practices.

The overall political, economical and law and order situation of the country remained highly volatile. In post 9/11 scenario, Pakistan faced menace of terrorism. Besides facing the consequences of Afghan War, Pakistan was affected by various ethnic, religious and linguistic conflicts which have increased terrorists' activities. The deteriorating law and order situation have severely affected overall socio-economic structure of Pakistan.³²

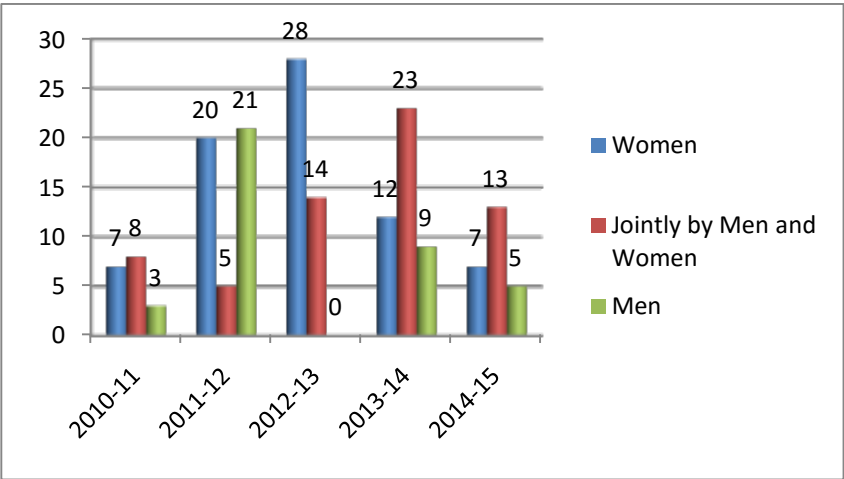
Political instability, civil-military relations, executive-judiciary tension, weak law and order situation, growing sectarianism, lack of socio-economic development, post-election disputes leading agitation and above all energy crises, remained major issues during the study period. Drone attacks, killing of Osama bin Laden in a covert American operation in Abbottabad, NATO air raid on a border post in Mohmand Agency initiated the debate on Pakistan's role in the war on terror, and its implications on national sovereignty, a new and brutal attack on Army Public School, Peshawar leaded it towards conclusive but firm end.

In the event of continuing insurgency, sectarian violence, escalation of instability and insecurity owing to menace of terrorism, the re-haul of overall security policy and concrete measures through effective legislation were expected among the major tasks before the legislators at National Assembly.

Private Members Bills Introduced and Passed by the National Assembly During 2010-15

A total of 175 Private Members Bills were introduced during 2010-15, out of which 73 were introduced by the women members either independently or jointly with other women members whereas 62 bills were introduced jointly by men and women members. However, only 14 bills were passed during the reporting period. Amongst which 10 were introduced by the women representatives. Thus contributing 71.4 % towards total policy out come during 2010-15.

Table: 2 Private Members Bills Introduced/ Passed by National Assembly of Pakistan (2010-15)



Source: Data gathered from National Assembly Debates and compiled by author

While quantitative yardstick is sufficient to assess the legislative performance of the women representatives as compared to their male counterparts, the diversity of legislative areas and scope provide a detailed understanding of the women’s priorities and preferences. The child protection, women’s rights and protection, human rights and voicing issues of marginalized groups of society remained priority areas for women during the study period. A total of 33 bills were introduced in this regard.

Table3: PMB Passed by the National Assembly of the Pakistan during 2010-15

Sr	Year	Bill	Gender
1	2010-11	The Privatization Commission (Amendment) Bill 2009	F
2	2011-12	The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2010	F
3		The Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Bill 2008	F

4		The Medical and Dental Council (Amendment) Bill 2009	F
5	2012-13	The South Asian Strategic Stability Institute University Islamabad Bill 2013	F
6		The Dar- ul- Madina International University Bill 2013	F
7		My University Islamabad Bill 2013	F
8		The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Bill 2012	F/J
9		The Capital University of Science and Technology Act 2013	M
10		The Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Act 2010	F
11		The Pakistan Psychological Council Act 2013	M
12		The Reproductive Healthcare and Rights Act 2013	F
13		The Abolition of Discretionary Quotas in Housing Schemes Bill 2011	M
14		The Election Laws (Amendment) Act 2013	F
	2013-14	No Private Members Bill was passed	
	2014-15	No Private Members Bill was passed	

Source: Data gathered from National Assembly Debates and compiled by author Interestingly, all 14 Private Members Bills were passed during the last three parliamentary years of 13th National Assembly (2008-13) as none was passed by the 14th National Assembly during the period 2013-15 despite introducing almost 69 Private Member Bills which remained stuck at Committees level.

The passage of three Private Members' Bills addressing the anti-women practices were landmark legislations sponsored by women legislators. "The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2010", earlier introduced as "the Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Bill 2010" entails 14-year jail term and fines up to Rs one million upon commitment of this crime. The "Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Bill 2008" – provides protection against depriving women from inheriting property, forced marriages, wanni, and prohibiting the practice of marriage with the Holy Quran.

The "Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Act 2010" safeguards child rights by preventing corporal punishment in educational institutions by imposing penalties for those who are found

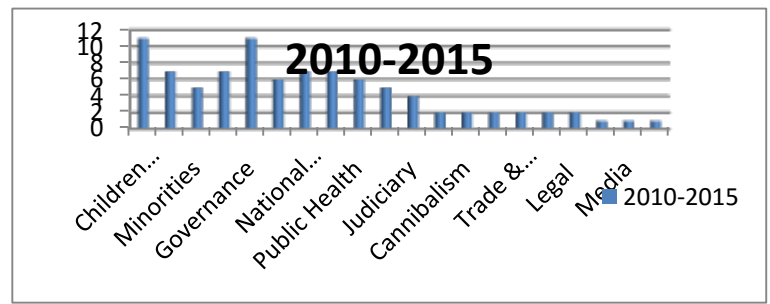
guilty of such punishment. The “Reproductive Healthcare and Rights Act 2013” protects women reproductive healthcare rights of women and men, and to redress the complications arising out of pregnancy and childbirth, reduce maternal death etc.

“*The Medical and Dental Council (Amendment) Bill 2009*”) was passed to regulate the quality of medical education across the country, prescribing procedure and terms and condition to authenticate such institutions which may be recognized as medical universities and colleges. Additionally the Bill declares a penalty of rigorous imprisonment of between one to five years, and/or a fine of ten million rupees for establishing or running a medical or dental institution or college which is not recognized (under section 22A) or for which recognition has been withdrawn (in section 22B of the Bill). Four bills amongst the passed bills sponsored by women pertain to establishment of new universities to promote higher education in the country.

Bills Introduced by Women Members in National Assembly of Pakistan During 2010-15

The private member bills introduced by the women legislators reflect their interests in addressing issues of women, children and marginalized groups of society i.e. minorities, disabled persons and transgenders. A total of 33 bills were introduced to protect the rights of women, children and other marginalized segments of the society thus fairly addressing feminist legislative approach advocated by many scholars. The thematic areas include protection of women rights and their representation, protection of children from rape, pornography, molestation, corporal punishment at schools, kidnapping and their rights in case of unknown parentage, representation and protection of political rights of disabled persons, minorities and transgenders etc. Protection of human rights, education and public health also remained priority area for women legislators.

Table :4 Thematic Areas of Private Members Bill Sponsored by Women Representatives in National Assembly of Pakistan During 2010-15



Source: Data gathered from National Assembly Debates and compiled by author. The key legislation under women's traditional feminine interests is given as follow:

Women Rights:

- The Muslim Family Laws (Amendment) Bill 2010
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2011
- The Political Parties Order (Amendment) Bill 2012
- The Acid Throwing and Burn Crime Bill 2012
- The Political Parties Order (Amendment) Bill, 2013
- The Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace (Amendment) Bill, 2014
- The Representation of People (Amendment) Bill, 2014

Child Protection and their Rights

- The National Commission for Child Rights Bill 2012
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2012
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2012
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2012
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2014
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2014
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2014
- The Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment t) Bill, 2014
- The Child Protection System Bill, 2014
- The Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Bill, 2014
- The National Database and Registration Authority (Amendment) Bill 2013

Rights of Under Privileged Segments of the Society

- The Disabled Persons Employment and Re habilitation (Amendment) Bill, 2012
- The Disabled Persons Employment and Re habilitation (Amendment) Bill, 2014
- The Disabled Persons (Employment) and Rehabilitation (Amd) Act, 2015
- The Special Citizens Bill, 2015
- The Special Citizens Bill, 2015
- The Civil Servants (amendment) Bill, 2011
- The Protection and Welfare of Khwaja Saras Rights Bill 2012
- The Constitution (Twentieth Amendment) Bill 2012
- The Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2014

As many as 16 Private Member Bills sponsored by women during the study period were relevant to governance ranging from civil service, dual nationality, CDA, abolition or reservation of special quotas for capital city of Islamabad, census etc. Major legislation include as under:

- The Abolition of Discretionary Quotas in Housing Schemes Bill 2011
- The Civil Servants (Amendment) Bill 2011
- The Civil Servants (Amendment) Bill 2010
- The Right to Information Bill 2011
- The Capital Development Authority (Amendment) Bill 2011
- The Pakistan Sports Board Bill 2012
- The Reservation of Quota for Residents of Islamabad Capital Territory (Provincial Services) Bill, 2012.
- The Census (Amendment) Bill
- Pakistan Commission of Inquiry (Amendment) Act 2013
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2012
- The Civil Servants (Amendment) Bill, 2011
- The Pakistan Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2011
- The Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government Bill, 2013
- The Constitution (Twenty Fourth Amendment) Act, 2014

Besides women's traditional interests women responded successfully to national and political issues like political development, judiciary, election and to some extent national security and terrorism; the most intense and burning issues of Pakistan, which despite all its severity, could not invite a strong response from the women legislators. Although efforts were made to indirectly combat terrorism by sponsoring bills to regulate issuance and possession of mobile sims and rent restriction in the capital etc. However major anti terrorism legislation was backed by the government.

Conclusion

Women legislators in Pakistan have justified their presence in political institution through actively participating in decision making process. Women's inclusion in decision making process has not only enabled them to voice and address the concerns of women and under privileged segments of the society but also enlarges the possibility that they may integrate their perspective in mainstream politics and address public issues. Women legislators identified a broad array of issues of public interest while making legislative interventions. Introduction of private member bills to declare acid throwing as crime, protection of women from harassment at work place, their nomination by respective political

parties to contest against general seats, child rights ensuring social and economic welfare of children, combat child molestation, kidnapping, rape, pornographic acts, violence against children, prohibition of corporal punishment at schools, child marriage, rights of transgender regarding their citizenship, education, employment etc. representation of disabled persons in legislative institutions are to name a few that reflect women legislators' interests in traditional women's interest.

Likewise, they significantly address public issues while making legislative interventions for citizens welfare, census, governance, human rights, cannibalism and digging/ damaging graves and burial places and constitutional business etc. However, Women's perspective and their inclination towards peace by invoking legislative measures to curb terrorism, appeared to be a missing link. Pakistan paid a huge cost to converge upon National Action Plan to combat terrorism on legislative frontiers. Women legislators are expected to be more responsive to public issues besides leading gender agenda as traditionally defined, through capacity enhancement and making alliances and networks.

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