

Main streaming of Women in Khyber Pakhtunkhawa: An Overview

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Women have always remained a marginalized segment of the society for they have been considered an insignificant entity that cannot outperform men in social, political and educational spheres. The developing countries on the world map are still struggling with the status of women and the case of Pakistan is no different. After the creation of Pakistan a few initiatives for the emancipation of women were launched by the progressive writers group and some by women from the elite class of Pakistan. Strenuous efforts are underway in the country for mainstreaming the women and the province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is playing the role positively. The movement which worked for the uplift of women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa then known as North West Frontier Province was initiated by Khudai Khidmatgars back in 1930's. Till date different initiatives have been taken for the betterment of women in the province such as the establishment of women universities, Commission on the Status of Women etc. The research is qualitative and is based on primary and secondary sources wherein attempt have been made to highlight the initiatives taken in social, educational and political sphere with the conclusion that the progress has been made which is slow but steady.

Keywords: Women, Mainstreaming, Social, Educational, Political, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Mainstreaming of women is of paramount importance, for the world is on the verge of becoming knowledge society and gender gap eradication will only yield better and positive results. United Nations Economic and Social Council (1997) defined gender mainstreaming as "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality."

Today half of the world population is comprised of women but still this segment of society is subjugated, exploited, and offended by the male dominated policies, economy and technology (Naryana, 2015). Only little in letter and spirit has been done for women status elevation and like other parts of the world, the situation of women in Pakistan is appalling as they are considered best only for traditional activities in the very prevailing patriarchal society, where many believe that new roles cannot be ascribed to women in the social, political and educational sphere. Even after 70 years of independence women are still kept sidelined from mainstream economic activities in the wake of socio-cultural teachings despite having constitutional rights (Shah, 2015). As per World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap report (2016) Pakistan ranks 143 out of 144 countries in the

gender inequality index clearly illustrating women plight in the country. The situation of women in all the four provinces of Pakistan is gruesome and Khyber Pakhtunkhawa (KP) needs special attention in this regard, as for the last two decades the province has been engulfed in militancy, extremism and strict religious ideologies which have intensified and magnified the issue of gender justice and girls education (Jamal, 2014).

Status of Women in Khyber Pakhtunkhawa

Khyber Pakhtunkhawa (KP) has a total population of 30,523,371 of which 15,467,645 are males, 15,045,813 females and 913 transgender (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Woman is called *Khaza* in Pashto (Powers, 2013) and one of the Pashto proverb goes as *Khaza da Kor Diya dey* meaning “Woman is the lamp of the family.” However, lamp of the family is usually not independent in making decisions of her life and is at the mercy and wishes of men. Women in comparison to men are considered weak and inferior and as such liable to their control (Boesen, 1980). The honor of men in Pashtun society is greatly determined by the way they defend and protect the women, as well as their methods for regulating the behavior of women (Alston, 2014). Men are considered to be key stake holders in gender disparity issues and the notion of gender equality can only be attained if attitudes, practices and perception of men changes (Jamal, 2014).

Pashtunwali, the Pashtun law and code (Povey, 2013) have certain superior elements associated with men only like *Ghairat* (valor), *Badal* (revenge), *Jirga* (Informal power structure) and *Hujra* (common guest house) whereas women are associated with inferior elements like *Tor* (stigma) and *Peghor* (Satire) (Naz, Daraz, Khan, & Sheikh, 2013). It has been established that some of the elements in *Pashtunwali* are not in line with the Islamic principles like killing on suspicion, forced marriages, bride price and honor killing (Qadeer, 2014). According to Aurat Foundation Annual Report (2014) Violence against Women (VAW) have subsequently increased in Khyber Pakhtun Khawa. The details of offenses can be seen in Figure 1, where total of 736 cases have been reported with the murder being the most recurring case having 324 cases followed by suicide having 106 cases in the province.

| Offenses | No. of cases |
|--|--------------|
| Kidnapping/abduction | 75 |
| Murder | 324 |
| Rape/gang rape | 5 |
| Suicide | 106 |
| ‘Honour’ killing | 60 |
| Domestic violence | 66 |
| Sexual assault | 2 |
| Acid throwing | 2 |
| Burning | 2 |
| Miscellaneous | 94 |
| Break down of miscellaneous cases | |
| Attempt to murder | 48 |
| Attempt to suicide | 14 |
| Attempt to rape | 3 |
| Attempt to kidnap | 2 |
| Hurt and body injury | 9 |
| Vanni/customary practices | 8 |
| Harassment | 4 |
| Women trafficking | 0 |
| Watta Satta | 0 |
| Threat to life | 5 |
| Forced marriage | 1 |
| Total | 736 |

Fig1: Over view of Situation of VAW in KP (Jan-Dec 2014)

Source: Aurat Foundation Annual Report (2014)

FIR status in KP has improved because for the total 736 cases 589 FIRs were registered, the proportion was higher than Sindh and Punjab provinces. For 105 cases, no information was available and for 42 cases no FIR were registered (Aurat Foundation, 2014). The increase in FIR registration indicates that women in KP are now becoming aware of the laws and believes that a system exists for the punishment of criminals.

For the uplift of women conditions in KP, a Provincial Commission on the Status of Women was established under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Establishment of Commission on the Status of Women Act (ECSWA), 2009, enacted by the previous Provincial Assembly, Awami National Party (ANP) led government and the Act amended on October 21, 2016 by the current Pakistan- Tehreek - e- Insaf led government (Dawn 2016; The Express Tribune 2017). The establishment of such body is of immense importance but a dire needs exists for its efficient working as it has been reported that the Commission over the past three years has only formulated a policy framework for the betterment of women and the bill drafted for the eradication of domestic violence was rejected by the Council of Islamic Ideology (TheExpressTribune, 2017). Currently KP is the only province grappling with the Domestic Violence Bill as Sindh enacted the law in March 2013; Balouchistan in February 2014; whereas Punjab passed the law in 2016 (Dawn, 2016). The absence of the legislation against domestic violence is unfortunately contributing towards the increase in violence (Tribune, 2017) and for its prevention special helpline with the name 'Bolo Helpline' aiming to support victims has been launched by KP Social Welfare Directorate (Tribune, 2017). Besides, five (05) *Dar ul Amans* have been also established providing shelter to the runaway and destitute women (KP Social Welfare Directorate, 2017). In the recent years important acts and bills passed for the betterment of society in general and women in particular includes Elimination of Custom of Ghag Act, 2013; Enforcement of Women Ownership Rights Act, 2012; Khyber Pakhtunkhawa Deserving Widows and Special Persons Welfare Foundation Bill whereas Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dowry, Bridal Gift and Marriage Functions Restriction Bill, 2017 has been referred to the committee for its approval or rejection.

Education

Education is the most important tool for the economic growth and poverty reduction (Malik, 2014). During British rule (1849-1947) in the sub-continent, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had only two private colleges for boys and none for girls whereas the total number of primary schools was 162 in which 154 were for boys with 7341 students and 8 were for girls with 516 students (Rauf, 2017).

After the inception of Pakistan for the period of 1947-1948 the presence of 8413 primary schools were reported in the country and since then successive governments have strived for the betterment of educational system in the country despite the population growth and limited financial resources. According to Elementary & Secondary Education Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Annual Report (2015) there are 27261 functional Government schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhawa out of which 16787 schools are for boys and 10474 are girls schools. Figure 1 elucidates that number of functional institutes for females have increased in the past six years however the number is not at par with the institutes for males as males have 6313 more institutes than females.

| Government Institutions | Year 2010-11 | | | Year 2011-12 | | | Year 2012-13 | | | Year 2013-14 | | | Year 2014-15 | | | Year 2015-16 | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------|-------|--------------|--------|-------|--------------|--------|-------|--------------|--------|-------|--------------|--------|-------|--------------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Primary | 14770 | 7838 | 22608 | 14819 | 7941 | 22760 | 14963 | 8110 | 23073 | 14670 | 8222 | 22892 | 14357 | 8360 | 22717 | 13579 | 8465 | 22044 |
| Middle | 1527 | 1013 | 2540 | 1534 | 1023 | 2557 | 1528 | 1049 | 2577 | 1540 | 1072 | 2612 | 1516 | 1076 | 2592 | 1491 | 1088 | 2579 |
| High | 1229 | 530 | 1759 | 1269 | 567 | 1836 | 1333 | 647 | 1980 | 1351 | 676 | 2027 | 1386 | 722 | 2108 | 1412 | 762 | 2174 |
| Higher Secy. | 201 | 99 | 300 | 201 | 102 | 303 | 231 | 114 | 345 | 241 | 120 | 361 | 265 | 141 | 406 | 305 | 159 | 464 |
| Total | 17727 | 9480 | 27207 | 17823 | 9633 | 27456 | 18055 | 9920 | 27975 | 17802 | 10090 | 27892 | 17524 | 10299 | 27823 | 16787 | 10474 | 27261 |

| Government Institutions | Year 2010-11 | | | Year 2011-12 | | | Year 2012-13 | | | Year 2013-14 | | | Year 2014-15 | | | Year 2015-16 | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|---------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Primary | 1815795 | 960847 | 2776642 | 1840371 | 989476 | 2838847 | 1845242 | 997534 | 2842776 | 1932085 | 1080508 | 3012593 | 1937197 | 1066644 | 3003841 | 1919519 | 1118086 | 3037605 |
| Middle | 142238 | 77449 | 219687 | 147623 | 83022 | 230645 | 145982 | 83963 | 229955 | 149666 | 87852 | 237518 | 143684 | 82943 | 226627 | 132514 | 78799 | 211313 |
| High | 384743 | 177825 | 562568 | 388124 | 193168 | 581292 | 416179 | 209030 | 625209 | 438257 | 224975 | 663232 | 443166 | 231295 | 674461 | 435190 | 232591 | 667781 |
| Higher Secy. | 127824 | 77075 | 204899 | 128422 | 82374 | 210796 | 142927 | 89152 | 232079 | 155108 | 94014 | 249122 | 168709 | 100731 | 269440 | 188833 | 114157 | 303090 |
| Total | 2470600 | 1293196 | 3763796 | 2514540 | 1357040 | 3871580 | 2550340 | 1379679 | 3930019 | 2675116 | 1487349 | 4162465 | 2692756 | 1481613 | 4174369 | 2676156 | 1543633 | 4219789 |

Fig: 1 Six Years Comparison for Functional Institutions for Females and Males

Source: Elementary & Secondary Education Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Annual Report (2015)

Female enrollment has also improved with the increase in functional institutes as seen in Figure 2. The enrollment has increased to 1543633 in 2015 while it stood at 1293196 in the year 2010. Gender gap is present in enrollment and can be contributed to the fact that socio-cultural impediments along with economic obstacles are associated with decrease in women education (Naz, Draz, Khan, Mohammad Hussain, & Khan, 2011), families prefer to send males to schools and like to keep females at home (Haq, 2016).

Fig:2 Six Years Comparison of Female Enrollment in Schools

Source: Elementary & Secondary Education Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Annual Report (2015)

It is pertinent to mention here that the concept of coeducation does not exist in the government schools as they are gender-specific. Only recently landmark decision was taken by the incumbent Provincial government of introducing coeducation at primary level in the province. Adviser to the chief minister on information Mushtaq Ghani said, "The government will establish schools where boys and girls can study together," (Dawn, 2017).

Efforts for the promotion of higher education for women in the province are also underway as currently 73 government colleges are rendering graduate degrees to the women as seen in Figure 3. All the districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have government graduate colleges for women except in District Shangla and Kohistan (HED, 2017).

| No | Districts | Total | Girls | Boys |
|--------------|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. | Abbottabad | 11 | 5 | 6 |
| 2. | Buner | 05 | 1 | 4 |
| 3. | D.I.Khan | 11 | 3 | 8 |
| 4. | Hangu | 04 | 2 | 2 |
| 5. | Kohat | 06 | 2 | 4 |
| 6. | Malakand | 10 | 4 | 6 |
| 7. | Nowshehra | 08 | 4 | 4 |
| 8. | Swabi | 14 | 6 | 8 |
| 9. | Bannu | 12 | 4 | 8 |
| 10. | Charsadda | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| 11. | Dir Lower | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| 12. | Haripur | 10 | 6 | 4 |
| 13. | Kohistan | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 14. | Manshehra | 8 | 3 | 5 |
| 15. | Peshawar | 16 | 8 | 8 |
| 16. | Swat | 10 | 5 | 5 |
| 17. | Battagram | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 18. | Chitral | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| 19. | Dir Upper | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| 20. | Karak | 8 | 2 | 6 |
| 21. | Lakki Marwat | 7 | 2 | 5 |
| 22. | Mardan | 17 | 7 | 10 |
| 23. | Shangla | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| 24. | Tank | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Total | | 187 | 75 | 112 |

Fig: 3 Number of Government Colleges District Wise

Source: Higher Education Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Education in the province can be taken to new heights by strengthening universities for they are meant to provide leadership by producing educated and competitive youth who can serve in different walks of life. In 1950's there was only one university in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but with the advent of twenty first century rise in establishment of the universities can be seen as currently 25 public universities are present in the province. In order to see women in higher institute of learning after fifty eight years of independence first Women University with the name of Frontier Women University later changed to Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University was established in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2005. In the recent years two more women universities have been established in the province demonstrating that the provincial government is committed for the promotion of higher education among women.

Political Empowerment

Historically, corridors of power are nominated by males and females due to the socio-cultural barriers having overtones of religious norms of segregation of sexes remain excluded from the mainstream in Pakistan at large and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular. The movement which worked for the uplift of women was initiated by Khudai Khidmatgars back in 1930s. Advising the women of the area, Khudai Khidmatgar leadership told them that they should help themselves

instead of seeking help from their men (Shah, 1998). In the freedom struggle for Pakistan, women of North West Frontier Province, currently Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, also participated in the protest because on one occasion British Governor of the province on seeing the crowds of *burqa* clad *Pathan* women protesting against the Congress Ministry remarked that “Pakistan is made” (Malik, 2017).

Women have struggled for representation in the National Assembly of Pakistan and it was only in Pakistan’s People Party government (1972-1977) wherein women were given more rights and was regarded as ‘women friendly’. The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan (1973) paved way for women to enter in the country’s politics as Article 52 of the constitution provides for 17% reserved quota for women’s seat in the National Assembly while Article 59 provides for 16% reserved seats for women in the senate of Pakistan. Women of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has generally accessed National Assembly through 08 seats reserved, only a hallmark event occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa political landscape when Begum Naseem Wali Khan, first female politician won the general seat in 1977 elections and become member of the 6th National Assembly. Subsequently, in the general elections of 1988, five (05) candidates from KP contested on general seats but no seats were won (The Express Tribune, 2013). Rise in number of women candidates was seen in General Elections of 2013 wherein total number of 135 women contested on general seats and among them 18 women candidates belonged to KP who contested 15 National Assembly constituencies in the province (Aurat Foundation, 2013). However, nine (09) female candidates who entered the lower house in the General Elections of 2013 had regrettably no candidate from KP.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial assembly, where 99 general seats and 22 reserve seats for women are present also saw women contesting on general seats, as a total number of 26 females candidates came out of comfort zone and competed openly with their male counterparts (The Express Tribune, 2013). For the first time in the history of KP, a female deputy speaker has been elected for the provincial assembly (Dawn, KP assembly elects first ever woman deputy speaker, 2015) and Ms. Anisa Zeb Tahir khaili was appointed Minister of Mineral and Labour from Quami Watan Party a junior coalition party elucidating a change in the mindset of male dominated assembly. Twenty two (22) female legislators of KP assembly have outperformed males in official attendance, sponsored 46% of resolutions brought before the house and also sponsored six out of 17 private member bills. Female law makers were also successful in regularization of Lady Health Workers Programme, placed a law to protect the rights of working women and struggled for the institutional mechanism giving protection to the widow women (Fafen 2017). Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) has been also established with the object to strengthen the voice of the women legislators in the assembly. With this progressive outlook the time is not far away when the women will be playing their role effectively in all spheres of life.

Conclusion

Pakistan’s over all development solely depends upon the effective and maximum utilization of both men and women. Different initiatives have been taken with respect to the mainstreaming of women in the country but still more needs to be done. Women being 48.76% of the population cannot be ignored because real change in the social, political and economic conditions of the country will take place only if they are involved in all spheres. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa like all the other province of Pakistan has to take concrete steps towards the betterment of women because the province is usually linked with the women suppression. The steps like establishment of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women are commendable but the commission needs not to remain dormant and shall design and implement policies in letter and spirit for the women

emancipation in the province. In order to avoid retrogress of any kind creation of different avenues is required for the betterment of women in the society. As it is said “economic development follows social development,” therefore different programs protecting the women against any kind of abuse needs to be introduced. Frequent training and awareness programmes are needed to be arranged periodically to make women aware of their rights and equip them for exercising just demands. The women universities established in the province have to bring about a change in the minds of young women and shall impart knowledge beneficial both to the individuals and society. Similarly women on key posts in the province needs to come forward for the betterment of women and shall inspire others to do the same. Women need to exercise their right to vote and shall have their say when electing or choosing their leaders. The bright and safe future of the society lies in following policies providing equal opportunities to women to be able to grow and contribute to the society.

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