

Uncertain Future in Historical and Cultural Perspective (For the Women of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)

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Abstract

Human life is indeed the most beautiful and precious gift of God. Living a happy, healthy and complete life is the right of every human being, weather male or female. Culture is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values. It is the Culture which helps the people to connect to many social values, religions, believes, traditions and customs. It is the Culture which provides the people the automatic sense of belonging and unity by staying in a group and gives provides them the opportunity to understand the past history to which they belong and predict the future. Preserving cultural heritage is a norm most societies treasure because the historical, psychological and societal importance of honoring the past. The Cultural heritage laws govern claims asserted by the past owners and creators of cultural objects against the current possessor. These laws are important to protect culture from illicit exporting and importing.

Pakhtun socio cultural set up is intensively influence by the patriarchal stricter and male dominancy, which empowered male in all sphere of life and the women are suffering from all sort of discrimination from birth onward throughout their lives in Pakhtun socio Cultural set up. This paper is an attempt to highlight various department of life and participation of the women of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, discussing past, present and pointing to the future.

Key Words: *Culture, Sex Base Discrimination, Education, Human Right*

Introduction

By looking deep into the system of nature, it becomes clear that things depends on each other, or the life of one thing depends on the life of other, for example grass or other

things are the source of living for the grazing creatures and in the same way these grazing creatures are hunted down by the other creatures like lion, tigers, cheetah etc. Similarly these creatures gives benefits to one and other directly or indirectly, but most important of all is the fact, that all these are created by Creator for the benefit and survival of Human Beings. Each and every thing which is created by the great Creator is for the benefit of the human and the human life depends on it in some way or in other, whether it is grasses, animals or air, water etc.

Human species is divided into two, Man and Woman. Here this point must be kept in mind that the woman is created for the purpose of facilitation and resting of man but not as a source of his survival. Clear difference must be made in both these things. Yes, a man is allowed to have relations with a woman but he is not allowed to use her as a source of his survival by taking away her rights, her property, giving her in “*Swara*¹” and even her life. In Pakistan and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular due to the old trend, tradition and culture women are faced with tough situations.² These are given to her by virtue of her humanity, and as a human being she is also entitling to certain human rights which cannot be taken away at any cost, at any time, by any one. Human being must be treated as Human being only.

Since Pakistan is an Islamic state and the official Religion of the country is “Islam,” it will be quite relevant to look at the status of woman which is given to her by Islam. Islam has given a great deal of respect, sacredness and importance to a woman by virtue of her humanity as well as by virtue of her being as women. Women have been given all the rights to which the women are entitled and which deserves to them.

The status given to the women by Islam cannot be founded in any other religion of the world, for example they have been given equal right in the field of education, they got equal religious rights same is the case with social and cultural rights as well. In short we can say that Islam has given equal rights to all human beings whether they are male or female.

¹ “*Swara*” is the name of a bad habit popular in Pakhtun societies, according to which if a lady is kidnapped or someone is killed by the other party, in such case the convict or the aggressor will have to give a girl in this regard to the victim party, irrespective of the age factor.

² Naz, A. (2011). *Socio-Cultural and Political Constraints to Gender Development*. An Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

It is clearly said in the Holy Quran that, he who does the good deeds will get the reward whether he is male or female, and in the same way a whole *Soora*³ is related the one pious woman, (*Soora Maryam*). Even in religious obligations and duties women stands equal to a man like *zakat*; fasts, pilgrimage etc are equally required by them and will have the same reward as given to a man⁴. Thus I can say that the economic, social, cultural and religious possession of women is very clear; now let's see what is the situation of the women of the Islamic republic of Pakistan in spite of the rights given to her by Islam, international Human Rights Instruments and the Constitution of Pakistan?

This has become a tradition and cultural value of our society that women lack the ability and wisdom to discharge the duties and bear the burden of the modern world. Especially in Pakhtun societies here participation is most of the time liked with economic, religious environment and socio- Cultural matters and restricts here there.⁵ In our beloved state the Islamic Republic of Pakistan the women is not given the same respect, status and rights to which she is entitle as a human being. Truly speaking out of the capacity as mother, sister, wife and daughter she has no existence at all. In our society women has no respect for those in particular who are out of here homes for the purpose of education, health and job etc. She is treated as degraded and of bad character, discussed and commented everywhere she goes same is the case of women in education, health and other departments. Though for the purpose to get empowerment in the society and to get her economic, social, cultural and political right education is very evident.⁶ This is the concept responsible for the death, dishonouring and backwardness of the women in our society.

Women do take part in each and every department of life but the real problem is that if on one hand they are not encouraged on the other hand their efforts and services are not acknowledged and recognized as well. Moreover, it is the culture which is pushing

³ *Soora* is the name of a complete chapter of the Holy Quran, there are 114 *sooras* (means chapters) in the Holy Quran, one of which is by the name of Maryam.

⁴ Al- Quran.

⁵ Khan, W. (2011). *The Role of Pakhtun Social Organization in Gendered Decision-Making (A Case study of Batkhela, District Malakand)*. An Unpublished M. Phil Dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Malakand.

⁶ Anita, A. (2010). *Depiction of Women in Modern Pashtu Fiction*. Ph.D Desertation, Noor Ullah Katuzia Printer GT Road Peshawar, P.38.

women to the corner and constraints her, for example the set-up of our society, tradition, customs and the reluctance of her relatives is pushing her from bad to worst position in the society.⁷ According to the national survey report round about 70% women takes part in agricultural activities, while in cities 75% of works in various departments are done by the hand of female. Still they are struggling in Economic, Social, Cultural, Political rights, health and educational facilities. The most worrying fact is that the services of 65% of women is ignored and not brought in the notice of people by official media. Most of the experts hold the view that the constitution of Pakistan 1973 gives and protects the rights of women but still Article 25, 27, 34, 35, and 37 are not put into operation completely which is equally applicable on the citizens of Pakistan whether it is male or female.

Let's have an eye on various rights and the position of the women of our society;

Women in Legal and Political Field

Everyone has the equal right to take part in the political affairs of the country...⁸. It is stated in the constitution of Pakistan that everyone shall be provided equal opportunities to participate in the affairs of the state, and no one shall be discouraged on the base of cast status and sex⁹.

In a Pakhtun society, sense the person involved in politics will have to constant public appearance, so it is against their norms and customs that a women shall perform the same.¹⁰ Truly speaking that the situation of the women in the legal and the political field is not up to the level as it should be; because according to the UN women, the position of those women that stood at the minister level boost up from 14.4% in 2005 and 16.9% in 2012. Pakistan at the moment is 52 at ranking of the countries according to the representation of women in the parliament. Women are minimum in representation in

⁷ Reyes, and Socorro, L. (2002). *Regional Workshop on the Implementation of Quotas: Asian Experiences, Quotas in Pakistan: A Case Study*. Discussion Paper read at the —Workshop on the Implementation of Quotas: Asian Experiences! Organized by the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in Jakarta. P. 2.

⁸ Article 21, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

⁹ Article 35, the constitution of Pakistan 1973 No citizen otherwise qualified for appointment for the service of Pakistan shall be discriminated against in respect of such appointment on the ground only of.....sex.

¹⁰ Saiyid, D. H. (2001). *Women in Politics, Problems of Participation: A case study of Pakistan*. Islamabad: Shirkat Gah- Women's Resource Centre.

Baluchistan while they are completely absent from representation in FATA.¹¹ For the development, progress and stability of the state as well as society female participation is evident. We have a few examples that became parliamentarian by contesting direct election. In National Assembly we have 60 seats reserved for women to which women are nominated on the base of their party's electoral strength. Seats reservation is as follow;

Punjab-----35 seat

Sindh ----- 14 seats.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ----- 08 seats.

Baluchistan----- 03 seats.

Among the seventeen judges of the apex court of Pakistan there was not even a single female judge in year 2012. In the entire legal history of Pakistan a women has not become the member of the supreme court of Pakistan. Out of the 104 high court judges there were only 3 female judges, and two of them were appointed in 2012. In the legislative measure women were note as more focused because out of 54 private bills 21 were initiated by the women parliamentarians.

Since women who belong to “FATA”¹² are the most miserable possession that's why steps are going to be taken for their development, in this regard there is a great achievement in the shape of National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW).

In January the bill was adopted by the National Assembly, with 40 amendments this bill was presented to senate whereby it was passed in the second month of 2012, on the International Women's day 8th of March the bill was signed by the president of Pakistan and became a law.

¹¹ Basu, A. (2005). *Women Political Parties and Social Movements in South Asia*. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD). <http://www.eldis.ids.ac.uk/static/DOC18454.htm>, retrieved on 23/07/2011.

¹² FATA, is basically abbreviation, which stands for; Federally Administered Tribal Area

For the purpose of legislation and awareness regarding the female rights an important step was taken in Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad in January 2010. In this debate many experts in various fields of life participated and shared their views regarding to topic of discussion. The only thing on which all of them agreed was that; it is the women who suffer more from poverty as compare to man, especially in the families where the women are working as the financial supporters of their family. There, woman is not only faced with economic crises but she has to go through mental sufferings as well. The women who stood out;

Sharmeen Ubaid Chinoy

She made a documentary on the women affected by acid attacks and got the attention of the world in this regard in the result of which she was given Oscar award. She draws the attention of the Authorities of the effective implementation of Acid Crimes Implementation Act.

Shad Begum

Shad Begam basically belongs to *Lower Dir*, she worked very hard for the development of the women in very conservative areas. She is still working on this project, for her efforts to protect and promote social and political rights of the women she was given the International Women of Courage Award in 2012.

Zubeida Mustafa

Zubeida Mustafa is a senior journalist, she has worked allot written allot for the rights of women, for her extensive writings for the rights of women she was given “Annual Life Time Achievement Award from International Women’s Media Foundation; As a tribute to her, since she has worked for 33 year, a new award has been announced by the title of “Zubeida Mustafa Award”.

Malala Usafzai

Malala Usafzai took a great risk to protect her fundamental right, right to education in *Mingora*, Swat against Taliban. She is 14 years old girl, who got the global attention in

this regard; she is working for the implementation and protection of the rights of women. For the protection of the fundamental right of education at the risk of her own life the United Nations declared the 10th of November as the “Malala Day”. This incident resulted in a great international pressure on the state in terms of right to education for women in Pakistan.

Social and Economic Rights (challenges and opportunities)

Steps shall be taken to ensure full participation of women in all spheres of national life...¹³ it is also said that for the development and prosperity of the country, the participation of the women in every field of life is very much necessary. With Pakistan affected by the global economic crises and faced with its own central issues of water, electricity and gas shortage and high food prices, poverty level rose sharply. Women, already a vulnerable sector of society, got the worst part of the deal. The women of this country is far behind in social and economic field though the year 2012 has witnessed that the step are going to be taken to take away the economic and social grievance of the women of the state, yet still the country is characterized as the discriminatory allocation of economic resources.¹⁴ Still the steps which were taken are not of the nature to cope the situation and the need to take some concrete actions is evident. Here in Pakistan we have strange situation, for the services offered by women are paid half which is paid in full if offered by a male. Similarly they are considered as minority though in reality they in majority.

Tahira Abdullah, an active member of Human Rights group said that, “in Pakistan the ratio of people living in poverty is 75% and that is the women which is the major portion of it, and that is the women who suffers more as compare to men directly or indirectly one way or in other, which supports her family economically.

She said that in our country the exact poverty rate is not shown willingly. Reason behind that may the criticism or the public opinion or something else I don’t understand the logic behind that anyhow, experts are of the view that in countries like Pakistan the

¹³ Article 34, Constitution of Pakistan, 1973 Steps shall be taken to ensure full participation of women in all spheres of national life...

¹⁴ Shaheed et al, (2009). *Women in Politics: Participation and Representation in Pakistan, An overview*. Lahore: Shirkat Gah- Women’s Resource Centre. P. 26.

politician do talk about the female rights and development of the women and give rights on paper, but which has no concern with practical life, the sole proof of which is that in spite of all their sayings and high thoughts still the poverty rate is growing day by day and the graph of poverty is increasing. In this debate many steps and policies were mentioned that were announced by the government and by the end of the day they were not given practical shape.

The government of Punjab took some important steps in the Province;

- a. For micro financing the women Rs. two billion fund was instituted by the bank of Punjab.
- b. The women quota in the official jobs was increased from 5 to 15 though the implementation is still not adequate and unsatisfactory.
- c. For women causes Rs 14 billion were allocated the example of which is like women's empowerment Package etc.
- d. In women development department 35 new positions were also allocated, which resulted in release of 1.509 million in the year 2012.
- e. Many new projects and packages were launched for the women of rural areas such as Benazir Income Support Program, the beauty of this program is that with various trainings each participant were given as 12 dollars per month and her health assurance as well.
- f. A vocational training program was also held in the University of Faisalabad, for the purpose of enhancing the quality of the life of the women of the rural areas of the country, courses such as cooking, stitching, art and crafts, and fashion designing.
- g. Three-day capacity building program was conducted by UNESCO and the Rural Media Network for the purpose to teach the basics of media reporting like, violence against women, harassment and discrimination which are the facing in their day to day life.

There are some other important steps taken for the empowerment and development of the women across the country such as;

- a. For the purpose of protection, the rights of the female farmers, a dialogue was held in Peshawar in March under the supervision of the Organization named as Action. Which emphasized that the government should peruse the agriculture policy of 2005 and focusing female farmers of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the reason is that here 70% of the household income is spent on food instead of this to be spend on health and education.
- b. Out of 7,383 registered trade unions in Pakistan only 4,486 were women
- c. According to the figure indicated 8.92% of the women are employed as home-based working without providing and legal protection. According to a non-profitable organization working inside the country by the name of Home Net Pakistan, the implementation of the policy will give 41.10% urban and 70.7% of the women belong to rural areas as they are registered worker and will give them the basic right like pension etc.
- d. In Jun the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa enclosed four female crises centres in the province that were providing moral and legal assistance to the women of the province, though it has assisted 5,400 women by providing them the shelter as well as legal and medical aid. The reason behind this was the 18th amendment and the transfer of many federal projects to provinces among these centres one was in swat and the other three were in Kohat, Abbottabad and Peshawar districts and province. While the rest of the twelve are still there in Punjab waiting for the Federal decision to be taken.
- e. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa sports minister has vowed that there must be equal opportunities for females in terms of sports events. Pakistan Olympics association was also directed by the ministry of sports to hold national sports events.
- f. The woman that belongs to the remote parts of the country is faced with great hardships as compare to the women that lives in the settle areas. A “*Jirga* of Othman Khail¹⁵” Qaumi Movement also demanded for the access of women to

¹⁵ A *jirga* is the name of an informal group of elder and experience people of the local areas like; *bajoure*, *wazirestan*, *gandaow*, *jam bara*, etc. whereby they make decisions in accordance to the customs, traditions and norms of the society.

the health care and the education opportunities of the women living in those localities.

For our social and economic experts this fact is confusing that, in Pakistan the relation of poverty is direct with Human Rights, and in a society suffering from poverty the fulfillment of human rights is almost impossible. The women in particular which the most weak part of the society their rights are not restored rather taken away from them. Here the role of the women has been made limited to their homes, relatives and families only and their personal and intellectual role is neither encouraged nor acknowledged.¹⁶ This situation is much more serious and worst where the cultural customs and norms are given importance as compare to other rules here the importance of the women role is ignored.

The products made in household's level are not paid on the required rate as it should be; similarly there is great hardship in the availability of rough material as well. In the capital of provincial government Peshawar it was assured by the Prime Minister Amir *Haider Khan Hothi* that the women must be given full opportunity to represent their products at national as well as international level. They must be given a complete storey in the Peshawar Chamber of Commerce and Industries consisting 250 shops. This was said by the head of women chamber Ms Sajida Zulfiqar Rahim Khan. She said that it is a dream which on the way of reality, she said that the women of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is unbeatable in making "*Karder, Shawls, Amiridery*¹⁷", and many other products which is the specialty of the women of Pakistan, but still there is a need of its promotion, and support. An exhibition is required for this purpose not only on national but also at the international level.

¹⁶ Begum, S. (1987). *Status of Women in Tribal Areas*. Unpublished Master Thesis, Department of Sociology University of Peshawar, P.11-12.

¹⁷ Kardar is the name of a product which the local women of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa makes by their hands, same is the case with the Shawls, these are pieces of big clothes which the women of this locality wears in particular and are really beautiful and warm, these are again made by hands.

Education

Everyone has the right to have education and to go to school...¹⁸ Right to education was declared as fundamental right for the citizens of Pakistan.

Article 34 refers as to the participation of women to all the spheres of life; similarly, the state shall take steps for the development and promotion of the economical, educational interests of the people of backward areas of the country¹⁹.

It is also stated that the government shall provide to all the citizens free and compulsory Secondary education without any discrimination within the possible minimum time²⁰. Beside these state has taken the responsibility to provide to all the basic necessities of life without any discrimination on the base of cast, color and status in the society which includes; food, medical relief, education, housing etc.²¹

According to the recent UNESCO report, round about 5.3 millions of Pakistani children are not going to school and 64 percent of which are girls. Under the Millennium Development Goals, Pakistan was supposed to achieve parity in the statistics for education for boys and girls by the year 2015. By the end of the day the literacy rate was 41% for girls and 74% for boys.

The government of Punjab has claimed that they are going to construct 4 new women universities in, *Bahawalpur*, *Sialkot*, and *Faisalabad* and in *Multan* districts for the purpose to give rise to female education. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa things are very different about 21 girls schools were locked up due to the absence of female teachers in various parts of Charsadda, though the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa allocated seventy percent of budget for the female education, and that is expected to be spent on the schools destroyed by the hands of militants.

Only 22% of the children were there registered in Baluchistan which shows the exact picture of the female education In Baluchistan. According to the recent United Nation

¹⁸ Article 26, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

¹⁹ Article 37(a), Constitution of Pakistan, 1973

²⁰ Article 37(b), Constitution of Pakistan, 1973

²¹ Article 38, Constitution of Pakistan, 1973

Report 59% of Pakistani women gets the primary education only and do not reach to the graduation. While all over the world this percentage is 97, this shows the exact possession where we are at the moment. According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's report those women who lives in tribal areas or belongs to the agencies are living in the most vulnerable, miserable and poor situation²².

According to 2010-11 Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's Annual Report not even a single female student took admission in *FR Kohat, Bajour* and Frontier Region because not only the extremists but their parents are also against their education. A migrant woman Asia said that the women of *Mohmand Agency* lives under the instant threat and fear. According to 2010 HRCP report the migrated women is faced with great difficulties²³. Similarly in the disturbed areas that are the women who are made suffer as compare to men and are made to pay the price of their lives.

Inheritance

The constitution of Pakistan gives every person the right to acquire, hold, sell and transfer property in any area of the country irrespective of the sex²⁴. further it has been said, that no one shall be compulsorily deprived from his property unless it is in accordance with the law of the country. The law of inheritance is basically governed by Muslim Personal Law and Muslim Family Law Ordinance 1961. Cases of inheritance are decided by the courts of law, without jumping in the discussion of equality²⁵. Women has as a human being has the right of inheritance, but unfortunately in many areas as well as in society she is denied of this right given to her. In the rural Punjab the women is almost in all families deprived of her share in the assets of her father, and her share in agricultural land in particular.

²² Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), State of Human Rights in 1999, Lahore: HRCP, 2010-11

²³ Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). State of Human Rights in 1999. Lahore: HRCP, 2010.

²⁴ Article 23 provides that "every citizen shall have the right to acquire, hold and dispose of property in any part of Pakistan, subject to the Constitution and any reasonable restrictions imposed by Law in the public interest."

²⁵ Article 25 (1) "All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law. (2) There shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone. (3) Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the protection of women and children."

For this purpose the Punjab Women Development Department came out with a policy to amend the Punjab Land Revenue Act 1986.

Same is the case with the women of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in most of the localities the women are not given the right of inheritance, her right is taken away in many ways like, the money spent at the time of her marriage, “*barkha*”²⁶ and various other tactics. In order to protect the right of inheritance of the women in the assets of her father the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa passed an Act by the name of Enforcement of the Women Ownership Act. Under this Act if someone who violate this law has to pay a fine of 5,000 rupees and shall also be subjected for 5 years imprisonment. Without active implementation it is not but a pious hope only;

Women Participation in the Political Activities

To bring a state in the front line in the world, there must be political participation of the women in the electoral activities of the state, but here I would say that the situation is very much different in terms of women participation in the concerned activities of the state. For this purpose many attempts were made that the women must be given representation in the election commission of Pakistan but thing are not seems working. Apart from this even in many areas the women were not given the right to vote, such as in various localities of *Malakan, Mardan, Miawali* and in the “*Agencies*”²⁷ in particular the women were not given the right to take part in the election process of Pakistan by costing their votes.

The National Commission on the Status of Women made a request to the Election Commission of Pakistan to take notice in this regard, but no action was taken.²⁸ Shortly before the consultation of the commission with the political parties the commission came out with the policy that in the places where the women representation is less than 10%

²⁶ *Barkha*, is very famous tradition the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in this the brother or the brother of the female provides basic necessities to the women prior as well as even after her marriage,

²⁷ Here we use agency denotes the meaning as to pointing some locality like; Momand agency, bajour agency etc, which comes under FATA

²⁸ Ibrahim. (2012). *Socio-Cultural and Economic Constraints to Women's Political Empowerment in Pakhtun Society*; unpublished Mphil Thesis Department of Sociology University of Malakand.

are going to be re polled, but due to the pressure by the political parties this idea was ignored.

Women and the Law Enforcement

In order to reach to the solution of the women problems, the active participation of the women in the enforcement of the law is evident. Women are 0.85% of the total police force in the country, still till the day no one of them has reached to the bureaucrat level. In the year 2012 there were 19 women police stations in the state which had 3,700 police women, though these women remained less empower in their work field²⁹. Only some of them were at high position, in Lahore there were even no women head of police station, similarly the women female wardens of the city were not given the street patrolling duty as well. However in *Malakand* a positive step was taken by establishing the women police station and a family courts dealing with the cases of violence against women and the related issues, similarly in the most hostile region, *Gilgit Bultistan* a female traffic warden Tahira Yousub was given promotion to the position of Deputy Superintended Police (DSP).

Keeping in view the numbers of women in the state and the numbers of women in the law enforcement activities it is clear that this is not satisfactory in any way, which requires further improvement and development in the related department.

Harassment

Sexual Harassment has grown in Pakistan and seems to have become more than merely a prevented activity. Though it is almost problem of every state and it is strictly prohibited in every part of the world³⁰,

The state shall... [Ensure] that...that woman is not employed in vocations unsuited to their sex...³¹. But in Pakistan it has reached to a dangerous level, which needs some

²⁹ Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) State of Human Rights in 1999 Lahore: HRCP, 2012

³⁰ The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women,” United Nations, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

³¹ Article 37, the constitution of Pakistan 1973, the state shall... [Ensure] that...that woman is not employed in vocations unsuited to their sex....

serious attention from the authorities. Women are mostly sexually harassed at work places, there they rather more protection. In this regard the Punjab Women Development Department came out with a bill by the name of Punjab Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace bill 2012, for the purpose to better protect the rights of the women, but the bill is still pending.

An Anti-Harassment policy was established by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), under this policy all the universities of the state were required to provide the implementation process. This policy was offered in February 2011, while by February 2012 only 98 universities out of 128 followed the policy. In April there was a complaint filed by a female student in Faisalabad against her two teachers at the University of Veterinary and Animal Science (UVAS) Lahore, in consequence both of them were suspended but they denied the charges. Similarly in the University of Education in Lahore a complaint was filed against the male Professor by a female teacher.

In July a complaint was filed against the two male teachers by a female student in the department of Arts and Design, Hazara University Mansehra. Apart from this many cases were filed by the women working in various departments. Since the time of inception in 2011, the Federal ombudswomen for protection of women against harassment at the workplace found that about 62% of the women face sexual harassment at the working places.

This treatment is not only limited to the women working in the government departments but the same is the possession of the women engaged in the private sector as well, specially the women working in police, hospital nurses, teachers and office workers in particular. By looking this situation the other women do not take any interest in jobs or other services of the country.

Violence against Women

Violence against women is the main area which requires special attention. Women are attacked all over the country whenever they try to make a decision, particularly in the

field of education, job and marriage. Heinous crimes are done against the women such as honor killing; acid attacks and slaughtering are persisted without any systematic measures being taken to prevent such crimes. For example, in the month of June 4 women from *Kohistan* were deemed to be dishonored on the account that they were singing and dancing in a wedding party though their relatives were against the decision taken by the *Jirga* that's why violence against woman is considered as one of the major human rights issue in Pakistan that's why violence against women is considered as the most important and major human rights issue in Pakistan³².

Woman who deserves special care is instead of respect and care subjected to violence, and that's why the cases of violence against the women are reported almost all over the country. The most famous of these incidents was the attack on the Malala Usafzai in Swath, and a number of other attacks which are enough to highlight the risks that the women working for the female development are facing today.

Another serious fact is that crimes against those women working for the development and progress of women have reach to its peak, according to the "*Aurat Foundation*³³" report, the number of registered crimes against women in 2012 was 8,000, and it is strongly supposed that most of the cases might have been ignored and not mentioned publically by the media and law enforcement agencies.

Similarly most of even registered cases were not trialed and dismissed unheard. The "*ANP*³⁴" female leader Najma Hanif was shot to death on the 16 of August in Hayatabad, and her case is still pending.

Farida Afridi was shot to death by the two motorcycle riders outside of her home; she was the Executive Director of the Women's rights Organization by the name of (*SAWERA*), though she was receiving threats as well. This thing is very common for the women working in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the development of women. In this regard a female NGO worker was threatened that if she entered to *Kohistan* she is going to be

³² Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), State of Human Rights in 1999, Lahore: HRCP, 2012

³³ It is the name of an organization, working for the empowerment and development of women of different areas of pakistan.

³⁴ ANP, is an abbreviation, stands for *Awami National Party*.

arrested and shall be married to a local man, though no response came to sight by the government in this regard.

For the purpose to overcome the problems of violence against the women a bill was submitted to the National Assembly by the name of “The Acid Throwing and Burn Crime Bill 2012”, this bill covers many areas of the live like reporting, investigation, collecting medical evidence, compensation for rehabilitation and protection of the victims and witness, when the bill was submitted to concerned minister for comments it never came back, though the provincial assemblies were pressurized by the civil societies but still nothing happened even till know.

The head of “*Khwando Koor Organization*”³⁵ Maryam BiBi said that, in spite of the government saying that we have defeated the extremists still they are there and carrying on their activities in one way or in other coursing problems somehow. The women of this area have talked to me that and they let me know the conditions in which they are compelled and forced to live. She said that the women who have migrated and living in Internal Displaced People’s camps are faced with great difficulties in particular, and for the purpose of their survival they are compelled to use other means. This is not the possession of the women living in agencies and cities only but same is the case of District Tank of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where again the extremists are in majority.

Honour killings of Women

Killing in the name of honour is witnessed across the country involving both men and women. However, the majority of the victims of the honour killings are women, because in most of the cases men are exiled and forgiven by paying compensation in cash or handling over his sister or other girl as in “*Swara*”³⁶ to the other party. In most of the cases women are killed just on the base of suspicion of having illicit relations with someone or displaying an independence spirit that threatened the patriarchal way of life

³⁵ *Khwando koor* is the name of an organization, working for the empowerment and welfare of the women of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, under the supervision of Maryam bibi.

³⁶ “*Swara*”, is the name of a bad habit popular in Pakhtun societies, according to which if a lady is kidnapped or someone is killed by the other party, in such case the convict or the aggressor will have to give a girl in this regard to the victim party, irrespective of the age factor.

in their localities. This so called honour killing is the most consisting and abhorrent form of violence against women in Pakistan.

In the year 2012, 913 girls and women were killed on the name of honour, and this included 99 minor girls under the age of 15. Truly speaking the number of these reported incidents must be grater as the reported one because in most areas such cases are not reported by the family of the victims. Out of these 913 honour killings 613 women are killed in the name of having illicit relations with men often without any proof, more than 192 girls were killed only the base that they had married according to their own wishes and against the wishes of their family members. The perpetrators of these crimes are mostly their near relatives because in 203 case the crime was done by the hand of the brother of the victim, while in 171 case it was the father of the victim, in 209 cases it was the husband, in 61 cases in – laws and in 138 case the act was done by some other close relatives of the victims.

Reports shows that at least 17 were raped and 19 was gang raped before being killed. The ongoing year has witnessed that dozens of women were killed, majority of which were shot to death, some of them were identified while most of them went unidentified the death bodies were buried and their files were closed without any further investigation. The investigation authorities says that death caused by the unknown people are under investigation and soon the criminals are going to be arrested, but delay in most cases are caused due to the lack of co -operation by the victim families. They say that in women cases most of the family members do not registered the FIR, which mostly registered by the police personnel.

Domestic Violence

It is appeared from all account that physical and psychological violence against the women in the household remained as deep rooted as ever. In terms of domestic violence women mostly suffers by the hands of husband, brother, fathers and in-laws and these are the incidents which almost compels the women to burn their selves, shot down, jumping in the rivers or commit suicides through other means. According to a media monitoring report; in the year 2012, round about 52 women and girls were the victims of

acid attacks, while 16 women had their limbs amputated, these incidents happened mainly on the suspicion of “immoral” relations with the men. Hairs of the 38 women were shaved off which is highly a humiliating act, while in different part of the country around 50 women were burnt out for various reasons. Almost all these case are done by the hands of the relatives of the victims³⁷.

According to the *Aurat Foundation*, incidents of domestic violence has been increased as 8 times as compare to previous year, according to their statistics the reported cases of domestic violence from January to august was 4,587, which shows the exact picture of the domestic violence of against women in Pakistan. A medical student *Tuba Abbassi* said that most of the “*Parda Nashi*”³⁸ women are the victim of violence because if on one hand she lives within four walls unaware of her rights on the other hand she is mostly uneducated that’s why she is always more easily deprived of her as compare to the other women. Not only here father but her husband brother also uses various tactics to take away the property belonging her. Her murder in the name of honor, bad character and acid attacks has become day to day practice. Still no law has been enacted to provide effective protection to the women up to the date.

Forget about the equal rights of the women in our society, they are not allowed even to live according to own wishes, still they are not considered but third class citizens of the state.³⁹ Though women in our state are in majority but they are deemed as minority.

In our society women is respectable, but as sister and mother. She is care able but as a wife only. She is considered as respectable but only the relational matters of this capacity she is not given any importance at all. If same is not the case then let’s have a glance on the hospitals full of women, resulted from house violence, acid attacks and other domestic disturbance. Look at the jails there you will see unmarried young girls in the name of bad character or false cases against them treated inhumanly, again in mental

³⁷ Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), State of Human Rights in 1999, Lahore: HRCP, 2012

³⁸ *Parda Nashi*, is term used for some particular female, it denotes to the meaning of covering face and moves in society with open face, in most cases even such women avoids to go to courts as well

³⁹ Shah, N.M. (1989). *Female Status in Pakistan: Where are we Know?* In K. Mahadevan (ed). Women and Population Dynamic: Perspectives from Asian Countries. 150-166. New Delhi: Sage Publication Singhal, Damodar.

hospitals there are lots of women got mental problems due to mental and physical torture in the homes. All these presents the worst picture of the women condition in our society. If it is not satisfactory then turn back to yourself you will find that in one way or in other women is suffering from the hand of man somehow struggling for her safe survival.

We say that heaven is under the feet of women but why her life is so miserable and pity, in Islam women has given a very high level but in practice she is the most helpless part of our society. In theory women is the sacred and pious creature but in practice that is the women disgraced and tortured everywhere.

The body of women is the source of completion of all the humanity but still why she himself is so lonely, helpless and incomplete even for her completion she has to take permission from the man. As said by the great *Teepo Sultan*, “give peace and happiness to the women, because a happy woman gives birth to a brave and bold child, likewise a miserable and tortured woman gives birth to a cruel and criminal minded child”.

Positive approach

Now if the majority of a society lives in poverty, threats and in discrimination then there any activity, dream and steps of development would be meaningless and of not that much high quality. Urgent steps and effective policies are needed to be taken for the women who are suffering from the increasing poverty and illiteracy, because we are already very late in taking these steps.

One of the most important things which is still continued to be ignored or neglected is the shelter for women, which is due to the lack of training in the police personnel. We saw that the government and NGOs took really keen interest in the celebrating of the 8th of March as the “International Women Day,” similarly the government of Punjab announced on this day as the Women’s Empowerment Package; in which a list of ideas, policies and proposals were aimed to protect the rights of the women and bringing the women into a good possession. In this package the issues like women inherent lands, for dealing the cases of sexual harassment at the working place, the appointment of ombudsperson and the provisions of medical assistance of the women which is subjected

to the acid attack. Many more proposals and policies are under consideration and they are going to be put into operation by the end of this year.

After throwing light on all departments of life and the contribution of the women thereto; it can be said that women is spending life in a very vulnerable situation. Here position varies from place to place, if she is in a good position in capital area on the other hand she is denied to take admission or use here opinion by costing here vote. If in one part of the state she may use here opinion in marriage matter in the other areas she is hunted down by the name of “*Karo Kari*”⁴⁰, *Swara*, *exchange marriage* and many more. Similarly women are being the real contributors in the development of state as well hard workers in the fields, but still they did not have the certainty in spending a happy and stable life. By looking the past, discussing the current situation of the women of Pakistan, the steps taken, and the outcome of these efforts clearly shows that in terms of living of a happy, equal and complete life, the future of the women of Pakistan is completely uncertain in this regard.

Recommendations

- Implementation of women friendly legislation needs to be carried out within the stipulated time.
- The proposals offered and the plan made by the government and Non Governmental Organizations are needed to be looked accurately and given practical shape.
- Special attention is needed to be given to the women working in the workplaces, their rights needs to be safeguarded.
- Opportunities are to be given to the women by giving them representation in the judiciary.
- There is a great need of the women in the field of law enforcement departments, in order to overcome the women problems.
- Special attention and care is needed for the women in prisons.

⁴⁰ “*Karo Kari*” is the name of a bad custom or tradition, according to which a woman is suspected and declared as of bad or illegal character, and by the end of the day she is put to swear punishment including her death. This tradition is still very popular in various areas of Punjab and Sindh.

- Government policies for the relief of unemployed people must target women in priority, the government departments that discriminate against women while carrying out downsizing should be taken to task by the appropriate authority. All victims of discrimination on the basis of sex during downsizing must be compensated.
- Law will not put an end to the violence against the women alone, but that is the active machinery which will assure the implementation of all the laws enacted and policies drawn, and ultimately will result in the eradication of wrong and in the administration of justice.
- It is also very necessary that this issue should be recognized at national level, although the government considers it but, it should be made mandatory rather compulsory.
- Stress must be given on the more and more education opportunities on the doorstep of the women belong to each part of the country.

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Figures

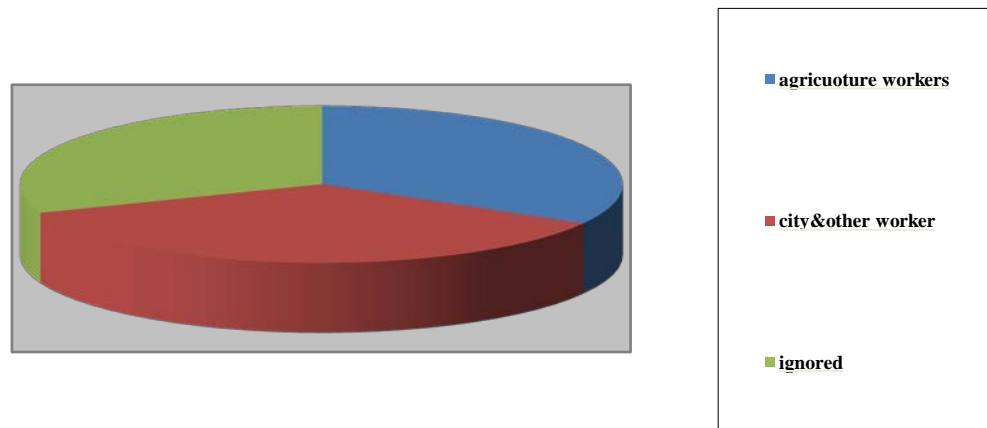


Figure 1. Distribution of the working women in Pakistan

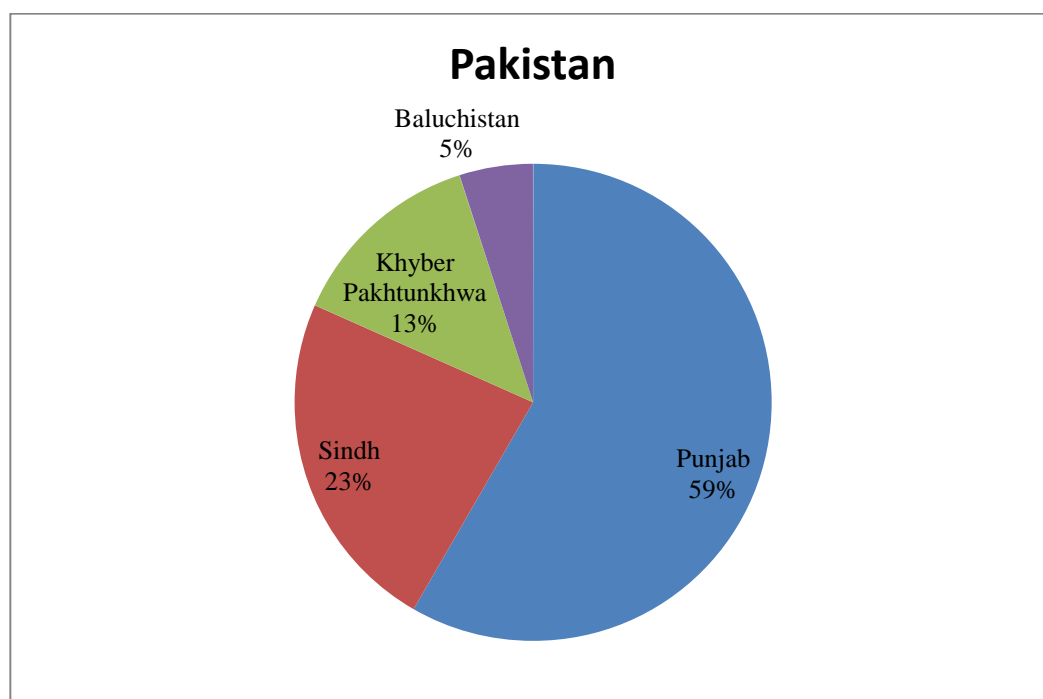


Figure 2. Seat reservation for women in Pakistan

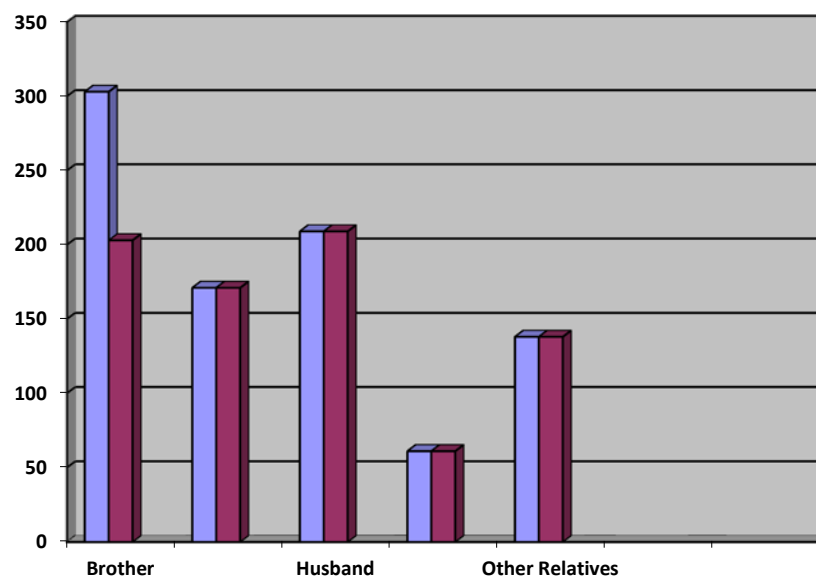


Figure 3. Honour killing and the relation of the aggressor ratio