

Role of Civil Society in Women's Empowerment in Pakistan: A Research Review

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Abstract

Women are the most significant part of our social structure but despite this fact, they usually faced a number of hurdles in their way to avail their rights. Civil society in Pakistan has been playing its role in social, economic and political empowerment of women. Most of government in Pakistan neglected the well-being of the people especially the empowerment of women. But General Parvez Musharraf regime special importance was given to women empowerment. There were many laws enacted for empowering women such as, the establishment of ministry for women development, an ordinance about the immediate release of women from jail, the passing of women protection bill in parliament, the approval of 10 percent quota instead of 5 percent for women in central superior services by the cabinet. A content is descriptive method used to analyses the role of civil society in empowerment of women. This paper also describes the current status of women in our society. The both primary (Interview, observation) and secondary (books, journal, and Newspaper) sources have been used for collecting and evaluating data. Moreover, this paper is attempt to highlight all those factors which are struggle for the empowerment of women, and also discuss the response or reaction which were came from the empowerment of women.

Keywords: Civil society, empowerment, women's, political, social, economic

Introduction

Women empowerment in our society has been a dream which could not be put into reality in practical term. This paper has been developed to establish a connection between the issue regarding the women empowerment and the role of civil society to empower the women. Women comprises of 59 percent of the total volume of the Pakistani population but remained deprived of its due status in society. This fact reflects a great gender disparity in Pakistani society. It cannot also be denied that despite of so many prevailing hurdles women are enjoying their due status in several

sectors of life. The main dilemma is the gender discrimination that has continued to hamper the women rights for a longer period. This discrimination remained dominant even through several measures were taken by the federal and provincial governments of the most prominent reason behind this discrimination is the norms, traditions and values of our patriarchal society from the first day. This fact has reduced the role of women in political, economic and social sphere of life. This difference gives rise to many questions at the time of providing the due status to a woman.¹

In 1997, the Commission of inquiry for women depicted in its report that social economic indicators have also confirmed the implementation of discriminatory laws and practices that has generated the lag between the men and women, in different sectors. This report said that in some cases the violence against the women has increased considerably that enhanced the obstacles for women to attain their due rights². To solve this problem it is needed to educate the women very first. In this regard there are many civil society organizations in Pakistan that are playing marvelous role. These are print, electronic media, political parties, academia, professional associations, traditional and nontraditional faith-based Organization, (FBOs) etc. These Organizations passed through a very difficult and tortuous period to make a space in such an orthodox and conservative society. There are also some non-state actors that also played some role for women empowerment, but our focus is on those Organizations that are related to women rights³.

To create awareness among women Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) played a vital role to fight for their social, economic and political rights. These Organizations have also faced the criticism as they are alleged to ignore the poor middle class of our society which are the first most deserving class. So, the history of the women activism can be traced back in Pakistan at the time of independence and its after Marth. There were several women related Organizations which voluntarily played their role for nation building and the efforts for freedom. But the role of women at the time of freedom seems to be different from the today's role. The absence of an Organization has been noticed till 1960s, which could fight for equal rights for women in Pakistan.⁴

The first phase of women rights started in Pakistan in 1960s, when some women NGOs demanded for the family rights of women as given by Islamic rule. The second phase began in when some discriminating laws were imposed which effected the social status of women. The third and last phase may be attributed to the era of 1990 when women Organizations grew rapidly due to global effects. During this period the development in information technology also helped to generate awareness in women.⁵

Despite of the efforts of such organizations no remarkable change has been observed in the conservative society of Pakistan and as a result the society became more conservative as still, they are facing gender discrimination. The reason behind this failure to the role of fundamentalists for misinterpretation of Islam, domination of

patriarchal mindset and failure implementation of women related laws properly. The domination of patriarchal structure in Pakistan has also admitted in fourth UN world conference submitted by National Report of Pakistan including rigid orthodox norms, and inelastic non socio-cultural customs values.⁶ These efforts could be useful if the domination of patriarchal society be minimized up to some extent.

It has become necessary to assess the role of civil society Organization and to remove the weaknesses in efforts taken for women empowerment. It is also important to mention those obstacles which are continuously influencing these efforts to get required results.

Background of Civil Society Organizations in Pakistan

In Pakistan there has been a continuous debate to utilize citizens and other means such as organizations, initiative groups and non-state elements in different fields. In this whole effort civil society established different institutions where citizens could be provided an opportunity to devote themselves for their requirements in different forms.⁷ Civil society played its role to motivate citizen to use their potential to create an opportunity for their rights of freedom of expression or to provide their services for their own community for population. It is considered as one of the most effective means to uplift the poor, weak, and depressed class of the society, to fight for their rights.⁸ If we looked at the role and structure of civil society of Pakistan before partition it seems to be it in different form. For example, Kinship (Biradrism), village level local self-government, (Panchayat system) and Tribes assembly (Jirga) lead by some religious leader were empowered to decide and rules⁹. Moreover, most of the activities were took place by the encouragement of some religious belief and politically. A system of corporate structures official institution and codified legislative and administrative practices was introduced by British rule on the basis of city-based associations and organizations¹⁰.

Since Independence 1947, The evolution of civil society in Pakistan has been weak by the structural dynamic of state formation legitimizations and consolidation, with national security concerns, dictating political decisions making from the start, the state has conventionally adopted centralized authoritarian system of power ¹¹. When Pakistan came into being it was a nation occupied in processes of becoming unified. Through the favor of freedom movement did produce a feeling of unity. Hence right of its sources the state was strengthened with the support of bureaucratic authority at the cost of civil society ¹².

After the independence, different types of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) were established to handle and to provide the facilities to the Indian migrant. Later on, they were expended for the well-being of family, to overcome poverty and other social services¹³. The general ignorant of deprived classes and rural areas due to the lack of planning and government intervention had to lead the development of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as it was pretty much difficult for the government to provide the facilities like health, education, water etc. in such circumstances civil society got the opportunity of flourishing, as the government was unable to handle a wide range

of problems simultaneously. It was the time, when civil society started its evolutionary phase in Pakistan. The political and economic structure of government was too weak to manifest its flow¹⁴.

In evolutionary phase the purpose of civil society was limited for its oppositional role. In the cities, it was centered around group of lawyers, reporters, professionals, students' associations and well-known families. In village and in tribal areas, clans led by landlords and chieftains were its support¹⁵. The civil society in Pakistan is like two corresponding universes, one made of the urban, modern, liberal, secular, cultural and image conscious while the other, consist of ethnic, sectarian, tribal and clan-based organizations that promote traditional religious value¹⁶.

If we glance the political history of Pakistan. It seems that civil society flourished during the regime of Ayyub Khan when he became a president against Fatima Jinnah in 1965 presidential elections. It resulted into restlessness in the country in the form of anti-Ayyub marches, strikes and public processions which lead to the out breaking of new interest groups and social classes like traders, merchants, industrial labors and industrial bourgeoisie etc. this divided the jagged into rich and poor. The anti-Ayyub movement saw fissure of various profession groups. The most outstanding example was agitation by engineers, doctors, accountant and other technocrats in public bureaucracy against the reigning civil services of Pakistan¹⁷. A wide range of anti-government agitation and protest lead to the establishment of new military of Yahya Khan.

The advent of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto government in 1970, brought a drastic change in social and economic sector. New trade and student union, professional and women organizations came into front because of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto electoral manifesto. In the period between 1970, and 1980, it has been experienced an increase in the wealth and volume of a middle-class sector of Pakistan. This may contribute to the polices of Punjab government in the form of alternative job opportunities outside the state in Persian Gulf and in foreign funded and activities inside in Pakistan. This added with increased use of education as a tool of social mobility, and growing urbanization enhanced public expectations and ambitions. Thus, the new economic and social forces were able to articulate their social and political interest through Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)¹⁸.

As Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was the product of electoral system, he tried to strengthen democracy and Islamic socialism in the country due to which the beneficiaries are not only from religious sector but also from religious sector but also from industrial and agricultural sector. The Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto program of nationalization paved way to provide some design of "Token legitimacy" to the government. Therefore, the popular support enjoyed by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was absolutely reflect in Civil Society organizations (CSOs) movement which however, seriously feel out of favor during

Zia- period-Ul-Haqq.¹⁹

It is matter of fact that during Zia ul haq regime civil society and its other progressive ideas were strongly repressed. Zia ul haq wanted to have the influence of its power on Pakistan Psyche. The constant sectarian conflict, program of Islamization and ban on the freedom of the thoughts by the Zia ul haq government had a great negative effect on every sector of the country and groups like Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), country's intelligentsia, student, labor and trade unions. The lawyers and other professionals decided to defend every sphere from the military impact and intended to demise Zia ul Haqq regime²⁰.

During the Zia ul Haqq rule the situation prevailed at that time openly supported those sections in Pakistan which were related to religion. The support of religious sector resulted in the weakness of the secular forces of Civil Society. Partially to the political and social crises and partly due to the development of electronic media.²¹ In the year 2007, the rallies and protest lead by lawyer for the restoration of civil rule become fruitful in bringing awareness. Several other sectors of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) like student, women groups, journalist, human rights activities, and trade unions also joined the lawyer movement. Here also the purpose of struggle was to ensure independents of judiciary, parliamentary supremacy, free media and fair election²².

The political and security crises highlight the functional dimension of Civil Society Organizations (SCO_s) in Pakistan. Before this, they were not so active and remain depressed under government influence. No doubt, the role of media in recent years have proven positive in bringing activeness and curiosity to solve the social issue by the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and government institution.

Review of literature

This research paper dealt with the review of literature on the role of civil societies to empowered the women of Pakistan from 2002 to 2008. The review of literature is was completed under the three dimensions according to the objective of the study. In the first instance it discussed the role of civil society in motivating or promoting the women participation in politics. In the second attempt it seems discussing about the role of civil society organizations in social activities for the women empowerment, and the third phase, it discussed the hurdles which are faced by the civil society to empower the women, by orthodox Ullman, and other conservative people of Pakistan. According to the Usha Sharma, the main reason behind the gender discrimination are the typical social values of patriarchal society of Pakistan. She also suggested the women education as a remedy of this problem. She also pointed out the low rate of socio-economic indicators due to less women participations in economic sector. The first phase of the efforts for women which gave emphasis on motivating the women for their rights started in 1960. Civil society demanded for women rights from religious plate form as they believed that Islam gives stress to provide basic rights of life to

women.

Secondly, according to shazadi zamurad awan, (2017) the most remarkable role was played by NGOs and CSOs to protect the women rights. The NGOs protested against some ordinances that were hampering the women rights and demanded for their abolitions. It is important to note that the advocating the women rights in the typical Pakistani societies was not an easy task. It was indeed a life threatening mission to challenge the prevailing laws. Especially the orthodox Ullman of society were enough to create a serious problem for CSOs only through a short catalytic speech. It was the most difficult hurdles in this regard. Despite of every efforts the desired goals could not be achieved in first phase. It was very difficult to change the mindset of the fundamentalist society. It is believed that deliberate ignorance of the poor class and women in society result in the emergence of CSOs.

Usha Sharma says, that these CSOs tried its best to encourage citizens to use their potential to create an opportunity for their rights of freedom of expressions. It is view of Adnan sattar and Rabia Baig, the form and structure of CSOs in Pakistan affairs independence was change from its local level system that was empowered to decide at village level. Its concept remains dominant for many years to rule. According to Ayesha khan and Rabia khan, no doubt NGOs played a pivoted role to strengthen the women rights at political and religious forum. But as a matter of fact, in the early stages to mutual cooperation between the different NGOs was not strong for enough to flourish the common cause. So, in the year of 1995 to 1996 government seriously considered the importance of NGOs in the country which lead to the foundation of PNF. Adnan sattar and Rabia baig view that the NGOs and CSOs became stronger and stronger in the period between 2002 to 2007. However, it was the period of military leader but the leader of this time Gen. Parvez Musharraf was a man of different mindset. He supported the women and highest number of women rights acts were approved in parliament in his regime. According to Dr. Fakhar-ul-Islam, civil society and democracy in Pakistan (2010) according to Dr. Ayesha Anees malik and Muhmad Amir discussed about the hurdles which were created by orthodox ulema and conservative people in the way of civil society organization which were work for the women empowerment.

Many people and organizations are working on the women rights bills, and providing justice for the women, but this research paper is highlighting the role of civil society in empowerment of women in different sector like a political, social and economic.

Role of Civil Society in Empowerment of Women

Man, and women are two main components of every family, and society from first day of human evolution. They were, they are and they will remain inseparable from each other in any and every sphere of life. Whether it is development of an individual into a family or the change of a family into society is truly attributed to the mutual relationship of man and women. Being a realistic thought the negation of any one

member will lead to the stand still of life on this planet. Every one admits this fact but it is also fact that the women ignored and she suffered despite of every efforts in building a family and society. A question rises that why this discrimination behavior is carried out with women only? Despite of considering the fact of importance of women it is kept deprived from many of its right custom or sometimes deliberately.

This discriminatory action has created the sense of gender difference in many societies of the world. It is also fact on the other hand that women struggle for their rights when this gender difference increased to an extend of intolerance. Their importance is considered but for the short period of the time. First of all, the women are struggle for their rights in European society and these movements paved the way of other deprived women of the world. These efforts lead to the making of laws for the protection of women rights and gradually these were adopted and implemented on other societies of the world.

In Asian country there has also been a discriminating behavior with women. In Indo-Pak region there were some brutal social customs which are carried out with women. Despite of the reality of these facts' women participated in every sphere of social and political life. In Pakistan too there are many events references to be quoted for women empowerment that were conducted for women rights. All these efforts which were done for women empowerment were the fruit of hard struggle of Civil Societies, (CSOs) Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and other institutions. These efforts remain continued after different time periods even in military rule to oppose discriminatory laws. The most remarkable efforts in this regard flourished in 2002 and onwards.

It is a general believe that one remains fact to achieve its goals if he is politically weak. In order to ensure the empowerment of women, it is indispensable to secure the women rights politically. In Pakistan, it can be observed throughout the history that even it is democratic or military rule for the women right's violation laws are opposed politically. In some cases, women are criticized too but they succeeded to avail the opportunity.

Civil Society and Women in Pakistan

It is a general believe that in Pakistani society the root cause of deprived women status in the domination of patriarchal society. A patriarchal society gives importance to the birth of the baby son over a baby daughter. It is because the son is considered as a source of income and strength. So, the over women look down in Pakistan society and a burden over the family. Women remain crushed on the issue of customs and eve religion in our society despite knowing the fact that Islam is only religion which allocate the maximum protection, respect and rights to a woman. Unfortunately, this could not be realized in practical sense. Still in Pakistan there is a several organizations, institution, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organization (SCOs) which are contesting for women rights²³.

In modern time, the vital role of civil society cannot be veiled as it is a means to undemocratic elements to proceed according to democratic rules. A civil society critical view on legislature, executive and judiciary of a country. It comes to front if it finds that something has implicated against the law or human rights. In Pakistan, Civil society is playing marvelous role in the matter of democratic issue as it believed that the human rights can be best protected a democratic rule. Civil society has also made room in science and policy making process.in Pakistan civil society is deeply its roots in all important spheres of life. Its main purpose is to concentrate on, the rights of minorities, and especially on women rights and social development²⁴.

In Pakistan civil society has become active to empower the women after realizing that like other countries of the world violation is prevailing in Pakistan in several forms. Sometimes it become difficult to explain that what is women violation. Several theories have been put forward to explain. This phenomenon in the light of the world reports that the women violation reported in different forms from the society to society and culture to culture. This issue has drawn a considerable attention as it leads to the health, severe physical, psychological, social and emotional problems. The term women violation is taken different in different countries. But mostly it is considered as a sexually, psychologically and physically committed acts against the women. After child abuse it is taken as the world's second human rights abuse. In some parts this issue is describe different sense like courtship violence, domestic violence or abuse, spouse abuse and intimate partner abuse etc.

A part from its forms the studies have tried to illustrate the reason behind the violation. The available data up to some extent tries to ensure, that these reasons are common in the world, such as unemployment which creates a situation of an increase in depression and aggressiveness which lead to physical, sexual and emotional harassment. As unemployment is one of the major problems of Pakistani society so most of the women violence case may be attributed to unemployment. Other opinionize argue, that it could be due to economic independence. If women are economically strong enough, they would be less victim of violence. However, this idea cannot be applied generally because working women are also found as a victim of domestic violence. In rural areas where women are encouraged to work out to support family it is believed that women should be thankful to men for this permission. Actually, men are not ready to accept a woman economically independent or strong as it is against their ego or manliness in many societies of the country²⁵.

Unfortunately, like Indian society in Pakistani society feudal and tribal society is still prevailing in most of the rural areas. In feudal system women are provided no rights and are treated like slaves. While in tribal societies it is believed that women are the main sources of every lined of evil. Men are considered free from any evil. Behind this believe there is a famous proverb woman, money, land (Zan, Zar, Zemen) which is the

bone of contention in the world. This believe is the main tool used to exempt men from every evil and responsibility of feeling guilty.

Human Right abuse in Pakistani society

Pakistani society is the witness of the different forms of human rights abuse, which sometimes leads to murders or killings. The most common abuses include blasphemy, child, abuse, target killing and discrimination against women. Pakistan has considered these abuses through convention like the international convent on civil and political rights, the convention on the all eliminating of all forms of discrimination against women. The Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Economic, social and Cultural Rights etc. unfortunately all these efforts failed to achieved the desired goals and fixed targets. The new born civil society of the Pakistan which is the victim of the military and civilian rule are kept carrying out movements and human rights activist are working with their possible devotion and sincerely. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has highlighted the human rights violations against women and religious minorities. It has created the linkage between the human rights and democratic development²⁶.

Women employment in different sector of Pakistan

Certainly, women are plying pivotal role in dividing the economic burden of a family. The role of women in economic development cannot be denied at all. A country through its economic policies decides the generation, circulation and distribution of many Article 13 of the constitution of Pakistan ensure the elimination of the all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW). It demands for the policies by state to stop the freezing of the wealth and resources in some limited hands. Article 34 of the constitution of Pakistan urges that step should be taken to ensure the full participation of women in every sphere of the life. Article 37 (e) of the constitution demands that state should provide the best suitable working conditions for women and children according to their age and sex. The Article 38 of the constitution especially, refers to the welfare of people without differentiating between the gender, cast, and creed etc.it is globally accepted one of the positive impacts of women employment is that an increase in income, increase in self-esteem, and self-confidence and a sense of economic security and independence.²⁷

In a wholesome if all the past effort were done for the women empowerments and protection of their rights are analyzed it become clear that these efforts were at climax during the General Parvez Mushraf rule. The civil society and its organizations become strong to promote and implement their ideas due to government initiatives because these initiatives according to their wishes and demands. The General Parvez Musharraf era the traditional era for the major social changes in the country. During the General Parvez Musharraf regime many constitutional amendments were made to protect women rights that were never reported ever in the history of the Pakistan. No doubt, it was the great courageous and bold step taken by the General Parvez

Musharraf because it was very difficult to convince the parliament to consider these amendments and bill in practical form as these were never given due to its importance. The main reason may be attributed to the typical patriarchal society and its members which take it against to their ego to give rights to the women. But General Pervez Musharraf succeeded in allocating power and basic rights to women lawfully. The main landmark in this regard is the increased in the reserved and general seats for women in national (Provincial assemblies to 17 percent). Beside this 33 percent seats were reserved for women in local government system²⁸. These measures which are taken in the time period of the 2002 that brought a remarkable change in the Pakistan's elected house. Another supportive measure was the approval of the gender-based legislation by the women parliamentarians which was approved by senate and four provincial assemblies with the clear support of the human rights organizations like Aurat Foundation, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), (AGHS), SUNGI and PILER etc. In addition, the National Commission on the status of the women (2000) also came to front in favor of these measures. Another effort during the period of 2003 is the presentation of "The Protection and Empowerment of Women Bill, 2003". This bill was forwarded in parliament in 2004 but before forwarding this bill a PPP member Shery Rehman presented another bill regarding the matter of "honor killing" on 30 July 2003. This bill was strongly opposed by some parties but after strong efforts of Ms. Nilofer Bakhtiyar, Miss Mehnaz Rafi and Miss Kashmala Tariq from (PMLQ) with the joint efforts of Aurat Foundation this official bill was in National Assembly on 26 October 2006.²⁹

In the year 2005, the main focus was to uplift the women status through legislation in the country. The enhancing of women status was the main desire of Pakistani women and the core issue of CSOs related to the women empowerment. In this context the tenure of 2005 has been very fruitful for women. The notable bills presented to uplift the women status and to provide protection to their rights in the period of 2005 are;

1. The Prevention of Domestic Violence Bill 2005.
2. The Establishment of The Office of Wafaqi Women Mohtasib Bill 2005.
3. The Senior Citizen Bill 2005.
4. The Protection of Serving Women Bill 2005.
5. The Inheritance Women Bill 2005.
6. The Economic Stability of Women Bill 2005.
7. The Prohibition of Marriage with The Holy Quran Bill 2005.

It can be assumed by the above-mentioned bills that Civil Society Organizations attempted wisely to protect the women rights in every sphere of the life³⁰.

In the year 2006, the women from political parties and Civil society Organizations (CSOs) did not sit clam and work with full devotion to get benefits from General Pervez Musharraf's policies regarding the women protection and its empowerment.

The important bills moved during the calendar of 2006 are:

1. *The protection of women (Criminal Laws amendment) bill 2006 this bill was moved by the government on 21 august 2006. Different parties showed different reaction toward this amendment as it was focusing on the amendments of the laws regarding adultery and Qazaf ordinances. As it was a critical issue so Mottahedeh Majlis -e- Amal (MMA) which was a group of religious alliance opposed to amendments. Only three political parties, named Awami National Party (ANP), Mottahedeh Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM), and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) supported for amendment. Despite of opposition the struggle for women rights remained continued and in the same year (2006) Miss Rafi and Miss Kashmala Tariq presented another bill to bring change in Haddoo Ordinance.*
2. *The Muslim family laws (amendment), bill 2006.*
3. *the bonded Labor system (Abolition) amendment bill, 2006.³¹*

In 2007 there is the start of the fifth but last parliamentary year of the General Pervez Musharraf's government. This tenure did not appear to be in favored of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and women parliamentarians. But once again the efforts of women activists in parliament are appreciable as they moved seventeen (17) bills in parliament for women protection and amendments of some ordinance. Here one of the most important point to be noted is that at the dissolving time of Pervez Musharraf's rule only two Bills could be approved in Act of previous years. These were draw on Honor Killings in 2009 and the protection of women Act 2006.³²

In 2008 there held general elections in Pakistan. After election the pace of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and its women parliamentarian was not as efficient and fast like the previous years. In this tenure it could be noticed that Aurat Foundation, United nation development fund for the women (UNIFEM) and Ministry of women development (MODW) seems to be active to work for there cause³³.

During the previous fifteen years, a number of initiatives have taken in Pakistan by the government, Civil Society and donors. These initiatives were related to the women empowerment and removed gender discrimination. Sometimes it become difficult to mention all those measures but the most influential efforts in this context can be summarized as. In the light of an ordinance moved during 2000 a national Commission on the status of women (NCSW) was established whose purpose was to keep a vigilant eye on women rights, status and other discriminations against them. This commission is worked for the women rights to fulfill the desired agenda in its actual sense. In response to the valuable contribution of women in social, economic and political sphere a National policy for development and empowerment of women was approved in 2002. On one hand where this policy focused on the multiple sectors for women it also gives stress for five percent quota for women in government sector.

Here another fact is also necessary to be mentioned that there is lack of women participation in high position, foreign services and ambassadorial sector. To provide opportunity to women in these sectors special attention is given in the second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP-II). According to the report of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Second (PRSP-II) it is due to the assistance of government that women got outstanding opportunity in all armed forces and some new field as well³⁴. Another ailing syndrome of our society in this practice of gender inequality which is the main cause of discriminatory behavior. This gap creates a great hurdle for women to avail the opportunity parallel to men. The Non-Government organizations (NGOs) and other civil society organizations (SCOs) put pressure on the government to remove this gap and proposed the Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP) which succeeded to achieve major gender equality goals through its reforms and policies. As Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP) was working on the basis of support of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and many donors but had to face criticism too. One of the main complaints was that the Gender Reforms Action Plan (GRAP) is not willing to work with self-devotion and most of the politician work when they are forced to take initiative through international pressure³⁵.

It would be over stated to say that Pakistani society contains a heavy mass of those organizations that work for the women welfare. These Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) work on women issues at national, regional and local government. They efforts to relate the women issues to different areas like economy, environment, and health or education etc. these efforts try to link with the women issues on the integral part of different policies and projects. A few organizations that purely work for the women in the provinces and federal areas of Pakistan are to be discussed below. This discussion gives a glimpse the overall areas and focus on women issues through which the basic problems and grievances of the deprived women can be understood³⁶.

Bedari Foundation

Bedari is a Pakistani non-Government Organizations (NGOs), its established, since 1990 for the promoting and protection of women's and children rights, Bedari works in Islamabad. Its main emphasis in on women violence's and their attainment by implementing and making women friendly laws and policies. It also focuses to bring awareness by various means. They also have contacts with other government agencies, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and other officials through online resources which deal with the cases related to women violence³⁷.

Rozan non-Government Organization

Rozan is a Non-Government and not profit Organizations, it was officially registered in December 1998 under the societies act of 1860, In Islamabad, Rozan works against the emotional violence against women children for each purpose Rozan has different programs to encounter various violations. For example, it has a program called

“Angan” that fights against the emotional health of children and sexual abuse. Another program “Zeest” deal with the emotional violence against women. Through “Rabta” program Rozan provided training to police in which its main emphasis is a change in the attitude towards others. Another remarkable feature is the “ Youth help line” through with it provides suggestions to the emotionally and mentally disturbing youth³⁸. Rozan mission is ‘to work with all people’ especially helpless groups, to collectively struggle for a society that is violence free, self-aware and accepting of itself and others.³⁹

Strengthening Participatory Organizations (SPOs)

Strengthening participatory organizations (SPOs), formed in 1994, in Islamabad, it is a well-renowned organization in Pakistan. This Organization is focus on the work on the following aspects such as: democratic governance, social justice, peace and social harmony. But this organization is performed various function in all four provinces of Pakistan by targeting fifty-four (54) districts. Strengthening participatory organizations (SPOs) work for strengthening and supporting community Organizations and public interest institutions. So that the poor and deprived class of the society can be helped. It also has a role in disastrous area through calamity or other natural means⁴⁰.

Bonyad Foundation

Bonyad Foundation is also known as (bonyad literacy community council) it is a founded in 1994 at Lahore. Bonyad foundation is Non-governmental organization, non- political, and non-profit NGOs working for the promotion of Education, and women rights. A batter future is a basic right of every of every human in every society of the world.in Pakistani society most of the population reside in rural areas and unfortunately the villages are not given due importance in policy making process. So, to protect the future of a rural women bonyad foundation as an organization of society work to provide education and employment to empower the rural women. It aims on the economic empowerment of women. To provide a gender justice it has carried out a special program as Masalihat Anju-man.it also target the disaster areas.⁴¹

Aurat Foundation and Publication service

Aurat foundation was established in 1986, as a national, non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGOs) under the Societies Registration Act 1860, Aurat foundation and Information services is committed for justice, democratic, and caring society in Pakistan, where men and women are recognized as equals, with the rights to lead their lives with self-respect and dignity. A most remarkable organizations of our society is Aurat Foundation that has penetrated almost in every district of Pakistan. Its goal is also ensuring women empowerment and to establish an ideal society with true democratic value. Aurat foundation has a close coordination with other Civil society organizations (CSOs) to promote and uplift the economic and political women status in country. It has a tremendous involvement in the training of women

councilor in local government system. To strengthen its programs legislatively this foundation, educate women parliamentarians to participate in national issues. It conveys its message in the form of book, newsletters, pamphlets and even through research papers⁴².

Human rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)

Human rights commission of Pakistan is an independent, democratic, non-profit organizations is registered in 1987, it is one of the oldest human rights commission in the country. Human right commission organization is committed to supporting and promoting human rights in the country, and work for the women empowerment and gender equality, and also work for the rights minorities, rule of law by access to justice, and democratic development, and elimination of the child labor⁴³. So, it can be considered as one of the best organizations contesting for human rights in Pakistan. Human rights commission of Pakistan (HRCP) puts pressure on government to sign the international declaration, agreements and conventions and to proceed accordingly. It also keeps a vigilant eye on human rights and informs government through annual reports. Just like other organizations it's also published its reports of its research and inquiries, conduct on major issues regarding human rights.⁴⁴ To implement its ideas lawfully it participates in law making process and constitution. It also has communication with public to keep them informed about the major issues of human rights. Human rights commission of Pakistan (HRCP) is one of the leading organizations in taking stand against "honor killing" in Pakistani society.⁴⁵

Hurdles for women empowerment in Pakistan

Keeping in view the above-mentioned facts it has become crystal clear that the Pakistani society is a truly patriarchal society. Such a typical patriarchal society undermines the women status. It is also matter of fact that Pakistani society is absolutely homogeneous to the other patriarchal societies of the world.⁴⁶ This fact cannot be denied that like all other society of the world some discriminatory attitude is carried out with women in Pakistani society. Women rights are crushed and ignored in Pakistani society for a deliberate appeasement of their manliness. Man, in our society can never be afford to give rights to women as they have opinion that women independence leads to so many social issues related to honor⁴⁷. Perhaps they are not ready to accept the women rights and its importance to maintain a peaceful society. Most of the women voiceless rise when the discrimination against the women become in tolerated. In this whole context it is a matter of hope that whenever gender inequality is observed it is opposed practically to defend the women rights. In Pakistan there are a number of voices for ailing and deprived women⁴⁸. Whenever women violence is reported in our society these organizations stood front as a shield to protect and safeguard the women rights. But to protect the women rights was not an easy task in a typical patriarchal society. In Pakistani history the most of the political tenure is seen under military influence. So, most of injustice with women accrued during

military regime. Any organization in the country which tried to defend women right had to face criticism and even in some cases and portrayed as non-conformist. The main hurdle in this aim was the lack of constitution support on the part of government⁴⁹. Most of the elements in the favor of the government against the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Some organization were even threatened to kill for the behalf of women favor. The most difficult was defend to against the orthodox religious parties and their hot-headed leaders. These were also responsible to provoke other sectors of life or institutions against Non-government Organizations (NGOs) and other organizations on the ground that these organizations want to promote prohibited liberalism which is against our religious and culture values. They also alleged that this liberalism will lead to the apathy of our whole society⁵⁰. So, the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) not only faced these problems as a general but also at political forum as most of the extremist parties moved bill in legislation against them. Here it become obvious that these hurdles were present in every forum of the social, political level. The issues related to the women violence was so frightful that one could draw itself form this mission immediately, as the consequences of these mission were many more times tribble dismal.

Conclusion

Pakistan is an Islamic republic state, and based on the name of Islam and its ideologies, but still the Pakistani people living in are following some restrictions which suppress the women rights. Human being is the best creation of ALLAH's and He blessed him with wisdom and knowledge. And this is superiority of human over the Angles. Therefore, the word human being is used then its mean that the women is also required to gain such education and learning which includes the fundamental basic of activities. Such as training and bringing up children, basic and higher education, management in home, and also work in the society with full confidence. In Pakistan, the civil society work with the help of other non-government organizations on women education and empowerment. Mostly Non-Government organization in Pakistan is work on the basis of social rights, such as, they encourage the women, to aware their rights and problem and try to solve it on their own behalf through different campaign and awareness raising program. They also work for the women participation in the politics, legislation, and decision making. Civil society organization play significant role for the women empowerment in every aspect. By glancing over the past few years, its proved that the marvelous role of civil society and its supporting agencies cannot be over locked. In a pure rigid and strict patriarchal society, it was very difficult to move against its prevailing waves. In Pakistani society the women look captured in the cyclones of violence's. These cyclones of difficulties were uprooting the women feet and made them so helpless and feeble that Pakistani women could never think to rise her voice for her right. In Pakistan, women are neglected their true status in Pakistani society as well as economy. Throughout the

world irrespective of the geographical and cultural aspects various means are used to curb the women issues to uplift its status. Such measure is adopted in Pakistan the Civil Society Organizations to put the women out of the cyclones of difficulties. The emphasis through these hard efforts were to be able the women to participate in different sector of life. In Pakistani society if their effort does not succeed the whole responsibility is attributed to the orthodox religious ulema tremendous efforts to education and employment could not uplift the women status at desire level. Another factor of the class difference also influences the women status. However, it is misconceptions that the performance is allocating rights to women has been totally failed. Several remarkable bills and acts have been accepted in parliament to safeguard the women rights. Moreover, the power self-motivated for each individual man and women are different where women have to face the oppression by virtue of being women. Thus, we cannot say that Non-Government organizations are successful in their role for the complete result, but the fact is the evolving of change is happening, there is a change in behaviors and attitudes of individuals. This small journey making change in the society although have a small achievement but the struggle and negotiation behind achieving these successes cannot be ignored.



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