



Women's Activism and Pakistani State Policies: A Comparison of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif Governments (1988-1999)

* Sher Muhammad

† Sajida Feroze

‡ Sidra Mubashar

- Vol. VII, No. I (Winter 2022)
- Pages: 64 – 73
- p- ISSN: 2521-2982
- e-ISSN: 2707-4587

Key Words: Women's Activism, Democracy, Power Structure and Historical Analysis

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to trace the history of women's activism in Pakistan, as well as the policies of the Pakistan People's Party and Pakistan Muslim League (N) Governments (1988-1999). This period after the revival of democracy following the military government is significant in understanding women's activism as well as the policies of two prime ministers with diametrically opposed ideological orientations. Explaining this movement's various expressions is necessary to comprehend its various phases. This study will help to identify the significance of specific historical circumstances, power structures, and national and international policy dynamics in shaping the women's rights movement in Pakistan. This study critically examines women's rights activism during the four terms of democratically elected prime ministers and how they responded to women's rights aspirations for equal status for women in society. This historical analysis is necessary to determine whether contemporary activism is a continuation of the past or distinct in terms of goals and modalities.

Introduction

Contrasts and paradoxes characterize the women's rights movement in Pakistan. A book titled 'Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back' captures this historical development perfectly (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987). People in Pakistan have twice elected a woman as Prime Minister, but the assassination of Pakistan's first female Prime Minister was another setback for women in the country. The country is home to female diplomats, bankers, chartered accountants, and human rights advocates who are well known internationally. A Pakistani woman became the first woman to serve as Director-General of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Fahmida Mirza became the first female speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly (from 2008 to 2013). Another young Pakistani girl, Malalla Yousafzai, was awarded the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize in

2014 for her resistance against militant groups and the repression of girls' right to education. On her way to school, a group of extremists ambushed her. She has been the youngest-ever Nobel Peace Prize laureate. The ability to respond to and adjust to changing circumstances and opportunities is critical for any women's rights movement to be successful. In certain cases, it takes on a new appearance. As a result, the activism of Pakistani women following the 1980s can only be completely understood when viewed in the context of its period. It is critical to understand the history of Zai-ul- Haq's declaration of martial law and the following execution of several initiatives to curb women's rights to make Pakistani society more Islamic. While many of the women who were involved in the 1980s activism and those who joined the movement in the 1990s are still fighting for gender equality today. It is important to answer the question whether women's contemporary

* DAAD Postdoctoral Fellow, The Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies (ZtG), University of Humboldt Berlin Germany.

† Lecturer Political Science, Government Associate College for Women Phularwan, Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan.

‡ M.Phil Scholar, Department of Pakistan Studies, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: sdrmubashar@gmail.com (Corresponding Author)

activism is a continuation of the 1980s movement or it has a new approach.

Women's rights activism in Pakistan had commenced in the pre-divided colonial period. During the early decades of Muslim Nationalism, they backed it and campaigned to win limited rights for Muslims ([Khan, 2018](#)). During the Pakistan movement, the women of the subcontinent played a major role in the struggle for independence ([Weiss, 1999](#)). It is argued that with the advent of the Pakistan movement, women's participation in the freedom struggle became a dire necessity both for increasing the Muslim vote bank and for displaying numerical strength at the Muslim League political rallies ([Shami, 2009](#)). The right to education was one of the earliest issues raised by Muslim women in India. In later years, the Khilafat Movement was widely regarded as the first documented instance of a woman becoming politically active. Since 1917, the women of the Indian subcontinent have been calling on the British government to grant them the right to vote. To bring about a significant change in the role of women in public life, this suffrage movement was launched ([Ali, 2000](#)). Between 1919 and 1929, women were granted the right to vote in all of the provinces, as well as in the majority of Princely States ([Mumtaz and Shaheed, 1987](#)). In the 1936 and 1937 elections, 80 women became members of the Provincial and Central Legislature ([Ali, 2000](#)). Another notable achievement of this period was the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act 1937, which gave Muslim women the ability to inherit property. Several other important pieces of legislation, such as the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act 1939, legalized Muslim marriage. It also addresses Muslim women's concerns about divorce through mutual consent (Mubarat) and court procedure (Khula). Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who encouraged women to be active participants in public life, also recognized the necessity of a strong female presence in politics. He usually made a point of having his younger sister Fatima Jinnah accompany him on most occasions to send a symbolic message to other women (Whilmer, 1996). Quaid-I-Azam stated in his address to the students that no nation could be a strong nation unless and until its men and women struggled together to attain its purpose. During the final phases of the Pakistan movement, women conducted protests, gathered funds, and waged an extended campaign to persuade the public to

accept the partition of the subcontinent, a strategy that was ultimately successful.

Ayub Khan introduced several legislative reforms to amend prior laws detrimental to women, notably the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, and the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1929, which defined the minimum age for marriage and the reasons for a woman's right to divorce. An important piece of legislation in women's history in Pakistan is the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, which was promulgated in 1961. The decision of Fatima Jinnah to run in the presidential elections against Ayub Khan was a watershed moment in the history of Pakistan. The 1973 constitution of Pakistan gave women a broader range of rights than had previously not been granted. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government also took several other steps to elevate the status of women in Pakistan. In 1975, the United Nations General Assembly declared the year International Women's Year and it was officially celebrated. Pakistan also assured to form a Women's Rights Committee (WRC) that would conduct a review of Pakistani women's rights and provide recommendations for future planning. The Zia government passed several laws that had a direct and major impact on women's lives. Pakistani women's rights organizations and activists have regularly criticized these laws. Unrest spread across a wide range of social groups because these laws' implementation failed to meet the requirement of justice and equal treatment. ([Ahmad, 1996](#)). One women's rights activist expressed concern about the future of women's advocacy in Pakistan.

Internally, activists must overcome generational mistrust and bridge the approaches of differently located activities. Older activists believe that younger women tend to ignore the broader political dynamics, are less interested in structural changes than in changing personal lives and are more interested in engaging with international movements than in building a national movement. The online activism of younger feminists is seen to exclude grassroots women, their actions are viewed as highly individualistic, and some of their concerns are considered to be elitist ([Shaheed, 2020](#)).

Revival of Democracy: Benazir Bhutto Elected as Prime Minister of Pakistan

Pakistan's first female Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, was elected following the death of Zia-ul-

Haq. She was the first and youngest female Prime Minister of a Muslim country. The question of female political participation has risen to the top of the political agenda in Pakistan since Benazir Bhutto was elected as the country's new Prime Minister. During the election campaign, whether or not a woman should be the head of an Islamic state was often raised. However, once she was elected, political opponents used it as a tool to discredit her administration. An Ulama Convention was convened in Pakistan in February 1989. At its conclusion, a joint resolution was passed, labeling Bhutto's premiership "anti-Islamic" and encouraging the people of Pakistan to oust her from power. These religious groups had supported Fatima Jinnah when she contested presidential elections against Ayub Khan. According to Shias, Islamic law does not prohibit women from serving as heads of state who supported Benazir Bhutto ([Zakaria, 1990](#)). The Ulama were cautioned against taking any actions that would cause political unrest. Later on, the Supreme Shariah Council rejected the charges against her, citing a weak Hadith as the reason for their decision (Shaheed, 2010). The council clarified that Pakistan's Prime Minister was not the head of state; she was the head of a political party, and so she was exempt from the same constraints ([Krook, 2010](#)). The Supreme Shariah Council's ruling was enough to convince most Ulama to end their anti-Bhutto campaign" ([Weiss, 1999](#)). Pakistan People's Party (PPP) remained vocal during the elections campaign that it would remove the discriminatory legislation passed by the Zia government, as well as make other measures for women's emancipation. Benazir Bhutto was prevented from implementing any reforms to the laws that had such a severe impact on the lives of Pakistani women due to her lack of political experience and a lack of a necessary majority in the Parliament. She was also unable to reinstate the women's reserved seats, which had lapsed following the 1988 elections. Her administration fostered a liberal culture that was obvious in the print and electronic media, but "no significant steps were taken during this period to improve the status of women, even though it was a period of a woman Prime Minister ([Rashid, 2006](#)). To assure the long-term viability of her government, some of the most notable women's rights organizations in the country have pledged their support to her

government. However, one activist for women's rights said that "concrete measures were less significant than the creation of a general environment supportive of women's participation and rights and openness vis-a-vis interaction with independent female advocacy organizations and individuals" ([Shaheed, 1998](#)).

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won a majority in the 1993 Elections, and Benazir Bhutto was elected the Prime Minister of Pakistan for the second term but she again failed to implement any significant reforms for the sake of women's development. Women's rights groups were wary of the new government's intentions, and they did not have high hopes for an improvement in their position under the new administration ([Lawrence, 1994](#)). To satisfy women's rights activists, she appointed several women to senior positions. In 1994, her government established the first women's police station, staffed entirely by female officers. However, some of these endeavors proved to be hollow, as exemplified by Asma Jahangir's refusal to become the country's first female judge on the pretext that she could not defend laws she did not believe in ([Badry, 2020](#)). In Islamabad, Pakistan, a National Convention for Legal Reforms was convened in 1994. The Convention's recommendations included a demand for the government to repeal the Hudood laws ([Weiss, 2012](#)). In 1995, a delegate of Pakistani women participated in the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women. As part of the preparations for the Beijing conference, the government and civil society organizations collaborated on a National Report, in which the twelve areas of concern deemed critical to women's empowerment were outlined. The ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by her government in 1996 was the most remarkable milestone. This Convention is the global benchmark against which a country's progress in improving the position of women can be measured, as well as a framework for achieving gender equality in all aspects of life. This was a major victory for women's rights organizations in Pakistan, which had been campaigning toward ratifying the Convention for many years. It was asserted that this puts Pakistan under an obligation to repeal any laws and customs, and practices that discriminate against women in Pakistan ([Shaheed,](#)

2016). In the same year, the government initiated a process to complement the Beijing conference by forming national and provincial core groups, which included representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to develop a National Plan of Action. During this period, women's rights organizations had greater access to the government and played a more active part in policy debate. These organizations also exerted pressure on political parties to reinstate the policy of reserving seats for female candidates. This campaign saw some success with the signing of a joint declaration by three major political parties calling for the reinstatement of women's reserved seats in Parliament ([Government of Pakistan 1985](#)). Prime Minister Bhutto appointed four women to higher courts for the first time in the country's history and built legal aid centers/shelters specifically for women. A Women's Distress and Detention Fund was also formed to assist women in distress and detention.

Violence against women was another issue that had received particular attention from the government. It was decided to undertake a media campaign to raise awareness about this issue. Because these occurrences had begun making news worldwide during this period, local and international organizations took serious notice of the killings of women in the name of honor. It was decided to undertake a media campaign to raise awareness about this issue. Benazir herself remarked that women are victims of physical and verbal abuse, poverty, and patriarchy. More resources should be mobilized to improve the performance of women's organizations in Pakistan ([Bhutto, 1996](#)). After a promising start, the Bhutto government struggled to maintain a positive working relationship with President, and soon issues arose that culminated in a confrontation between the two leaders. On November 5, 1996, President Farooq Leghari sacked her government, blaming it for domestic unrest and the poor performance of the country's economy ([LaPorte, 1997. P. 118](#)).

Nawaz Sharif Governments: A Period of Confrontation and Contestation

The President sacked Benazir Government in 1990 on corruption charges ([Rehman, 2020](#)). The Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI), a political alliance led by the

Pakistan Muslim League, was victorious in the 1990 elections in Pakistan. Mian Nawaz Sharif was elected Prime Minister of Pakistan. He also aided Zia's goal by promoting religious values throughout Pakistani society, and his government introduced the Sharia Act of 1991 in Parliament. Female activists were outraged by the introduction of this new legislative effort. They said that women had already undergone a painful experience due to Zia's Islamization policy. Women's organizations staged a protest, and many religious organizations also spoke out against and opposed the law. Furthermore, in the National Assembly in May 1991, the government was met with fierce opposition from the opposition parties. Due to the fear of religious groups' opposition, the Nawaz Sharif government did not make significant efforts to restore women's reserved seats in Parliament. Despite observations that the state fostered patriarchal ideology and practices through legislative measures, the government refused to express any intention to rectify the mistakes of previous regimes ([Moghadam, 1992](#)).

Every society, including Pakistan, has a problem with sexual violence against women. In Pakistan, women are also victims of this type of oppression. Several women's rights organizations labeled the rape of two women in Sindh as "power rape." The rape of Veena Hayat and Khursheed Begum garnered widespread print media attention. This also resulted in widespread criticism of the relevant legislation for such offenses ([Afshah, 1996](#)). In addition, when Human Rights Watch published a report indicating that 80 percent of detainees in Pakistan are held under the Hudood rules, the issue became widely publicized ([Human Rights Watch, 1994](#)). Asia Watch also accused the government of Pakistan of showing apathy towards the misuse of the Hudood laws leading to an increase in violence perpetrated against women. This series of events and negative media coverage helped to keep the topic of Islamic laws on the agenda of women's groups and the international community. The most significant accomplishment of women's organizations during this period was the formulation of collective recommendations for women's development in the 8th National Plan, as well as the establishment of a shadow working group that presented these recommendations to the official working group on women's development. Many Non-Governmental

Organizations (NGOs) took another significant step at the end of this era, launching a campaign to put women's empowerment on the political party's agenda for the 1993 elections. These activities included sending proposals for political party manifestos, engaging in dialogue with political parties, meeting with candidates, and motivating women to cast their votes. After less than three years in office, the Nawaz Sharif government was finally removed from office amid allegations of corruption.

Nawaz Sharif's second government was troubled by issues relating to the role of women's organizations and honor-based violence ([Rashid, 2006](#)). During its annual report issued in 1997, the Council of Islamic Ideology urged the mandatory wearing of the Hijab, firing public officials who do not pray regularly, and other measures to promote religious values ([Amnesty International, 1998](#)). As of 1997, the Punjab Government banned all cultural events in girls' schools. All officials were instructed to guarantee compliance with the Islamic dress code, including the Hijab. Further instructions were made for commercials, dramas, and broadcasts. Honor killing remained a key issue during this period. In April 1999, a young woman was brutally murdered at her lawyer's office in the name of honor. This shocking type of violence exposes the regime's flimsy rhetoric. It was a clear indication that the administration had not taken the necessary steps to control the rising occurrence of such crimes. It was discovered through a survey that the number of crimes committed against women had grown. According to another report, the number of honor killings in Sindh has increased rapidly in recent years. ([Ali, 2001](#)). Honor killings were justified by many politicians and religious organizations, who stated that they were carried out in conformity with "religious and tribal traditions." (*Frontier Post*, April 7, 1997). The Pakistan People's Party sponsored a resolution in the Senate on August 2, 1999, requesting a debate on honor killings; however, the resolution failed to clear preliminary talks despite being altered four times. It is noteworthy that when this resolution was introduced in the Senate, most senators refrained from voting. Many members supported another motion put forward by Senator Ajmal Khattak, Chaudhry Anwar Bhinder, Javed Iqbal, and Khudai Noor. They emphasized that it was a matter of honor for them and made it obvious that

there was no place for discussion or even debate. ([Cowanjee, 1999](#)).

During this time period, a serious confrontation developed between the government and women's rights organizations, as the government often expressed worry over the actions of these women's rights organizations. Government ministers raised concerns regarding women's rights groups during this time. Women's rights advocates such as Asma Jahangir and Hina Jilani, who have been outspoken on this issue, have been accused of "misguiding" women. The Information Minister, Mushahid Hussain, while addressing a seminar, criticized the various women's rights organizations, and he further added that television is a family activity and discussion on issues like rape should be avoided in that medium (*Dawn*, February 1, 1999). The statement of a provincial minister sparked another controversy in Punjab when he said that "all NGOs working in the province will have to have a clearance certificate from the provincial government and federal intelligence agencies before registration... and give a written statement that they are not involved in anti-state, anti-government and anti-religion activities". The government has also stated that it intends to audit all non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that receive funds from outside. He further criticized ASR, the women's institute for "brainwashing young women and making them pursue a course that clashed with government policies" (*Dawn*, December 30, 1998). The Chief Minister of Punjab also warned non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to avoid making political statements on their platforms. Binyamin Rizvi, Punjab Welfare Minister, voiced his displeasure with the actions of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), Shirkat Gah, and Ajoka (a street theater group). He stated that these organizations are "spreading vulgarity, immorality and obscenity in the name of human rights" (*The News*, May 15, 16, and 27, 1999). These non-governmental organizations (NGOs) expressed grave reservations about the government's policies and following statements by government ministers (*The News*, May 15, 1999). A coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has denounced the government for these undemocratic actions and the use of official apparatus to defame human rights organizations

(*The News*, May 27, 1999). It was noted that while Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif commanded a sizable majority in Parliament, he did little to better the status of women. His government did not follow through on the recommendations of the COI report. It launched the National Plan of Action but did nothing to put it into effect, except for a brief effort to increase women's shelters in the 1990s. The women's ministry was merged with the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education. In addition, the government attempted to sell up the First Women's Bank Limited against the protests of the concerned Minister. (Shaheed, 2009).

Women's Representation in Decision Making (1988-1997)

Disparities in the representation of gender among policymaking institutions, particularly in the

cabinet, which is the most visible institution in the government, have the potential to impact changes in governmental aims and agendas (Nwankwor, 2021). Institutions of power that are historically and culturally embedded, such as the cabinet, are characterized by the fact that they are dominated by men and conform to expectations associated with masculinity. Women have traditionally been underrepresented in the nomination pool for cabinet positions, and only men have usually held the majority of cabinet positions, according to historical data (Jalalzai 2013). Females have also been predominantly relegated to the positions of least power and influence in the cases where they have been taken into consideration (O'Brien & Krook, 2012). This section examines the cabinet of two Prime Ministers to determine how they view women's empowerment and whether they believe they should be included in the key decision-making institution.

Table 1. Women Representation in the National Assembly of Pakistan (1988-1997)

	1988	1990	1993	1997
Women on General Seats	4	2	4	6
Women on Reserve Seats	20	-	-	-
Women Total*	24	2	4	6
	(10.12)	(0.92)	(1.84)	(2.76)
Total MNAs (men and women)	237	217	217	217

Source: based on data from the Election Commission of Pakistan, www.ecp.gov.pk

Percentage of women in National Assembly

Table one shows that women have had only a nominal presence in Pakistan's national assembly from 1988 to 1997, according to the data. After the 1988 elections, the constitutional provision for women's reserved seats lapsed, and there were no women's reserved seats in the following three

legislatures. It is undeniable that, in the absence of a gender quota, women's representation in Pakistan has remained at historically low levels. In this case, it indicates that in Pakistan, women are unable to compete for and win seats in constituency elections (Muhammad, Abbas & Waris, 2022)

Table 2. Women's Share in Cabinet (1988-1997)

	Premiership of Benazir Bhutto		Premiership of Nawaz Sharif	
	2.12.1988 To 6.8.1990	19.10.1993 To 5.11.1996	6.11.1990 to 18.7.1993.	17.2.1997 To 12.10.1999
Total	49	39	47	24
Men	44	39	47	23
Women	05(10.2%)	0(0%)	0(0)	1(4.16%)
Women's Seats	24 (10.12%)	2 (0.92%)	4 (1.84%)	6 (2.76%)

Source: based on data from the National Assembly of Pakistan's official website, www.na.gov.pk

Table 2 is self-explanatory and reveals that women have just a nominal presence in the federal cabinet

during this period. Despite this, it is a reality that, in the absence of women's reserve seats, women

have only nominal representation in the Parliament throughout this time period in question. Just from 1988 to 1990, women had 24 seats in the National Assembly, with 20 being elected on reserved seats. During the following years (1990-1997), they did not have substantial representation in the legislature. Only in the first cabinet of Benazir Bhutto, women had a representation (10 percent) that is equivalent to their participation in the cabinet, when comparing women's representation in the federal cabinet. For example, women had no representation in the federal cabinet from 1990 to 1993 and from 1993 to 1996, as demonstrated in the following three periods. In his second term, Nawaz Sharif appointed one woman to the position of minister. Despite the fact that women had nominal representation in Parliament from 1990 to 1997, it became necessary to make these few women members of the cabinet in order to incorporate women's issues into policymaking. This study supports the argument that women were not given equal access to decision-making institutions.

After a long period of military rule, the restoration of democracy in 1988 transformed the context and procedures of the women's movement in Pakistan. It is argued that in 1980, women's activism was mostly reactive, state-centered, and confrontational in nature (Shahceed, 2020). The movement was mostly driven by middle-class and upper-class working women who, having achieved the greatest triumph in their personal lives, stood to lose the greatest amount in their professional lives. However, they were better prepared to deal with the dangers of activity while the country was under martial law administration (Shahceed, 2020). Women's rights organizations used a variety of strategies throughout the military administration, but after Benazir Bhutto was elected Prime Minister, they changed their strategy. Women's rights advocacy was put on hold for a while because of this new development. They needed to give the newly elected administration some time to implement policies promoting women's emancipation. The need for these organizations to respond quickly to certain issues during the military regime fostered a sense of solidarity among the various women's rights organizations. However, after the military regime was removed from power, some differences emerged regarding the groups' goals, tactics, and time frame. One

scholar called this period a transformative decade (Shahceed, 2020). In the aftermath of Benazir Bhutto's election as prime minister of Pakistan, women's rights activists expressed great hopes that certain issues would be addressed, as well as that policies and legislation imposed by a previous military dictatorship would be reversed. However, despite the fact that the Benazir government had the support of women's rights organizations and activists, the government was unable to do anything for women's empowerment. Despite the strong demands of women's rights organizations, her government could not reinstate women's reserve seats. Her government maintained that because she had a small majority in the Parliament, she could not repeal or amend the legislation passed by the Zia regime.

On the other hand, women's rights organizations have pursued a variety of strategies and tactics in their opposition to the government of Prime Minister [Nawaz Sharif. In response to his government's announcement of the Shariat Bill, the Women's Action Forum (WAF) re-emerged and mobilized other human rights organizations and religious minorities to launch a sustained campaign against the new legislation. According to statements made by government ministers, the administration wanted to implement a new strategy to control Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Unsurprisingly, several government politicians pointed the finger at women's rights organizations for promoting vulgarity in society and brainwash young girls. As a result, there was a lot of tension between women's rights organizations and the government over it. The interaction between women's rights activists and the state during this period was explained by one such activist. During the unstable democracy of 1990, activists' relationship with the state "vacillated between co-operation and collaboration with Banazir Bhutto [1988-90, 1993-1996], and confrontation and contestation during the time of Nawaz Sharif [1990-93, 1997-99]" (Saigal, 2016).

Conclusion

Women's activism in Pakistan has played a vital role in raising awareness of women's concerns and issues at many different levels throughout the country's history. The Pakistani women's movement has achieved significant progress in a

number of areas; nonetheless, the task is far from complete. Women's rights activists have been protesting against discriminatory legislation for years, and they have been seeking to get a national strategy geared toward female empowerment. Despite all of the advancements, Pakistan is still perceived as a patriarchal society with few alterations to existing systems, with the majority of the population residing in rural areas. It is important to note that women's roles and social standing differ depending on their socioeconomic class and geographic region.

Further, women from the middle class are divided into two groups: those who have gotten a formal education and are employed as professionals and those who have received a less formal education. Women from the lower and lower-middle classes have some influence in the household, while women from the lower and lower-middle classes are largely overlooked. Even though a strong women's movement forced Ayub Khan to enact several legislations to deal with family issues, the consequence was a more favorable environment for women's empowerment in Pakistan. Based on their religious connection, a new interpretation of women's roles emerged during the Zia-ul-Haq government. Nawaz Sharif was responsible for several measures and policies that impacted the status of women in society. He was widely regarded as the architect of the Hudood Ordinance, which had been a major source of frustration among Pakistani women for many years. Benazir Bhutto's government was

unable to bring back the provision of women's reserved seats. She successfully fostered a liberal environment for women by engaging them in the political process. However, despite the best efforts of women's rights organizations and female campaigners, Benazir Bhutto was unsuccessful in her efforts to alter or repeal the discriminatory laws implemented by Zia. She lacked the political will to do so and the support of a majority of members of Parliament. As a result of the Nawaz Sharif Government's policy of adopting the Shariat Bill and afterwards criticizing the genesis of women's rights, there has been a great controversy between the government and these organizations.

Several legislative and administrative initiatives have been implemented in Pakistan in recent years to improve the status of women in the country's society. No progress in the advancement of women's rights will be made unless existing habits and conventions and existing structures are transformed. Adaptability is crucial for any movement's long-term survival since it allows it to adapt to changing circumstances. State laws, regulations, and narratives have always had a significant impact on women's lives in a variety of ways. According to this critical examination of women's rights advocacy in Pakistan, it is impossible to dismiss the state's role in any endeavor. The importance of keeping an eye on governmental policies cannot be overstated. Women's rights organizations constantly need fresh strategies to meet additional challenges.

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