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Gender Disparities: Islamization and State Discourses in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Gender disparities and inequalities are the significant traits of state and society in Pakistan, where religion largely manifests the social identity of women. The construction of social identity on religious paradigm further specifies the restraining role of women in political and economic sphere which makes them vulnerable to discrimination of various kinds and victims of violence as they lack voices in decision making processes despite forming more than half of the population of the state. This paper aims to highlight the role of Islamization in Pakistan as a state discourse, making religion a central theme of policy making by various governments and regimes. This primarily augmented the existing gender disparities and undermined the women's status. This research is an endeavour to enrich the understanding of gender disparities and its relation with symbolic and concrete notions of Islamization resulting in paradoxical development for women in Pakistan. This study argues that the Islamization process did not aim to disempower women and the prime focus of the process was the political intent of legitimacy, although Islamization of politics led to commence such laws and policies which radically shaped the gender inequalities in Pakistan as an outcome. This paper attempts to explain the course by which politics and religion are intimately infused and this would help to explain the politicization of gender and restrictive laws related to women for fostering the patriarchal ideology in Pakistan.

Keywords: *Gender Disparity, Discourse, Fundamentalist, Islamization, Hudood Ordinance, Gender Role.*

Introduction

The state is considered as the highest form of civil organization and utilization of human resource is crucial for its political and socio-economic development. Women in Pakistan almost constitute half of the population, yet they are deprived of most of their rights and largely faced gender disparities. No progress strategy can rescue a state where major portion of the population is either out of development agenda or significantly powerless to influence the decision-making process. The foremost reason is that despite getting economic aid, assistance and following various

developmental paths throughout its history, Pakistan is still facing fiscal problems, governance issues and women empowerment challenges. Pakistan stands as 136th state out of 162 countries in 'Gender Inequality Index of 2018 by United Nations (UN)' due to its poor record on women's political & economic empowerment, reproductive health and education status (Pakistan-Human Development Report 2019: 5). According to a survey 'Global Gender Gap Report 2020' conducted by 'World Economic Forum' Pakistan ranked as the 151th out of 153 states following a constant decline in her ranking since 2006. This report highlights that in the context of gender parity, Pakistan is the third least performer, just ahead of Iraq and Yemen. Moreover, among the seven South Asian states included in this Index, Pakistan stands at the bottom. In the terms of economic participation of women, Pakistan's ranking declined from 112 in 2006 to 150 in 2020. It has been noted in the report that economic opportunities for women are lowest with only 32.7 percent. With reference to the political empowerment of women in 2006, Pakistan's score was 37 whereas its ranking reached to 93 in 2020. Pakistan was placed in 2006 at 110th in the terms of educational attainment for female however in 2020, it is ranked at 143 (Global Gender Gap Report, 2020: 277-8).

Women's low participation in decision making and governance in Pakistan is the result of her deeply embedded cultural and social patterns. Gender based violence; abuses and discrimination have become norms of Pakistani society which is primarily patriarchal in nature. Gender based discrimination in Pakistan turned into unchecked crimes against women such as forced marriages, honor killings, child marriages, the selling of brides, dowry death, Haq bakhshish (Marriage with Quran to avoid inheritance of property to the women), and acid attack etc., mainly due to the absence of an effective judicial system and lack of efficient laws probing women protection measures.

Objectives of Study

1. To analyze islamization discourses supported by the state for contrasting approaches regarding women.
2. To elucidate the gender disparity as a way of life in patriarchal society of Pakistan.
3. To envisage the socio-political orthodoxies towards women.
4. To encompass the inclination of political and religious parties towards women related issues.

Methodology

This is a qualitative research based on discourse analysis to provide a diverse epistemological grounds to investigate gender disparities in Pakistan. Secondary sources are used to infer the logical results.

Literature Review

Gender Disparity and Religion: Concept & Meaning

Gender is a term, which can be described in the context of social and cultural factors like social role, behaviour, status and identity (Feminist, 2008). Gender disparity is largely viewed as a concept to identify the differences between both sexes in the context of their access to economic resources, political empowerment, social contribution, status, power and privileges; largely based on their assigned roles and stereotypical behaviour persisted within a society. The term 'gender' was first coined in 1955 by John William (Money and Hampson, 1955). Gender inequality or gender gap can be described as "the difference between women and men in regard to social, political, economic, or other attainments or attitudes, or the problem perceived to exist because of such difference" (Gender Inequality, 2018). Gender differences primarily stem out from cultural patterns and social expectations (Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender, 2018). Gayle Rubin conceptualizes the notion of gender system as "a set of arrangements by which the biological raw material of human sex and procreation is shaped by human, social intervention." Gender has been characterized as "a major aspect of social life which is the locus of the oppression of women" unfolding gender as the "socially imposed division of the sexes" (Rubin, 1975).

Feminists expound that gender traits are largely the results of "intended and unintended" social traditions and practice. Haslanger argues that gender socialization primarily provides the trends for female to obtain feminine traits and to shape their feminist behaviour (Haslanger, 2012). Millet explains that gender behaviour reinforces the female subordination and confines them into socially subordinated roles to act as ignorant, passive and docile (Millat, 1970). However, gender is largely viewed as a social phenomenon, which is alterable through social and political reforms that can eventually lead to end women's subordination to patriarchal norms of a given society. Feminist legal theory expands on that "law approach towards women in relation to men has not been equal or fair." It provides that law has been the primary factor in shaping women's subordination in historical context (Feminist Philosophy of Law, 2018).

Since the 1980s, religion in many countries has moved from the private sphere to a public arena. The significance of religion in politics was advanced due to its ability to form an identity and to foster political mobilization (Raza, 2010). Islam is largely criticized by western scholars and non-Muslims for not providing the equal status and rights to the women in relation to their male counterparts. It is highly important to note that without understanding the Quranic instructions and verses within its context, one cannot obtain a better understanding of societal orientations and set up as commanded by Islam. Rights for men and women, according to Islam can be primarily defined as two key categories. The first category is based on that fact that both are human which leads to entitle them equal rights to live, to have a marital life and a decent stranded of living etc. They also have same religious obligations such as worship, prayer, faith, pilgrim and fasting, etc. to perform. The Quran addresses the women and men in a similar manner by calling them Al Bashar, Al Momin, Al Insan and Al Nas and made both sexes responsible for the endurance of the human race (Khan, 2004). Second category of rights under Islamic instructions are obtained by all the segments of society according to their vulnerabilities and biological

deficiencies. In this connection this study substantiates the following research questions:

1. Either the laws related to women were the product of islamization process in Pakistan or caused by other factors?
2. Did the political and religious parties address the women issues to converse the state discourses within the Islamic parameters?
3. Did the religious based women identity in Pakistan make them vulnerable to discrimination and violence?
4. Did the successive governments in Pakistan consider gender disparities and violence as established norms of the society?

Discussion

Islamization in Pakistan can be classified into four phases according to its nature, dynamics, and orientations. During the first three phases, the Islamization process remained symbolic and largely a cosmetic exercise, mainly focused on the political intent of securing popular support and overcoming of legitimaization issues. The fourth phase of Islamization under General Zia ul Haq was not contrasting from the previous attempts of Islamization in the context of objectives though an informal 'Mullah-Military' alliance was emerged with the help of religious political parties with the support of some external factors which advanced the intensity of the respective process of islamization of the Pakistani society.

First Phase of Islamization: Demands of Conversing State Discourse in Accordance of Religion

In Sub-continent, political-religious parties and organizations did not provide much support for the idea of a separate Muslim state based on a religious identity. However, the independence movement was largely advocated and carried by liberal nationalists who used Islam as an integrationist ideology to achieve the rights of Muslims. The notion of identifying a nation primarily on religious paradigms was extended to post independence era and this led to view the identities other than islamic largely disloyal to Pakistani state. The development unitary structures of Pakistani federation were largely outcomes of its 'National Security' perspective.

The relationship of religion and state gave birth to opposing views as modernist and traditionalists. Modernist advocated for a secular state, though accepted the place of religion as the central theme of society, however, they viewed the state and societal religion as two separate spheres. They also believed in equality of citizenship irrespective of religion, race and gender. The traditionalists were those Islamist segments of society that initially opposed the idea of demanding a state on religious grounds as creating of artificial boundaries was not in accordance with the concept of the Islamic Ummah. In the post-independence period, religious-political parties

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and Islamist groups started claiming their due share in politics as the state was formed in the name of religion.

‘Objectives Resolution’ was the first constitutional development in Pakistan, which provided significant place to religion in state discourse by stating that “The Muslims shall be to order their lives in accordance with the teaching and requirement of Islam as set out in the Holy Quran and Sunnah”. During the decade of 50s, a trend of an exclusionary politics was fostered by Jamaat Islami (JI) and other like-minded Islamist political parties where identity conflict was created by instigating to draw parameters to validate “who is Muslim.” Though this identity conflict clearly targeted Ahmediyya community, however women were also not immune for its costs in the end. In later decades when symbolic Islamization turned into a process of purifying society, according to the interpretations of ruling military regime (1979-1988), women were bound to re-frame their behaviour as prescribed by the state authorities.

In pre and post-independence, few women effectively took an interest in legislative issues. In pre-partition, the services of Begum Shah Nawaz were worth mentioning who worked to create social and cultural awareness among women. She was an active member of All India Women’s Conference (1927), which worked for the constitutional rights of women. This organization later demanded the 10 percent quota in the legislative assembly, but only 3 percent were granted in 1935 the Government of India Act (Samar, 2008). After partition, prominent Muslim ladies in Pakistan kept on upholding their position through legitimate changes. They encouraged enforcing the Muslim Personal Law of Sharia in 1948, which perceived as a woman’s entitlement to acquire all types of property. After partition, though women were not effectively incorporated in governmental issues, but they were dynamic in capacity building through proficiency advancement programs, family planning and role-oriented pragmatism. Other than that, women energetically advocating the enactment identified with family issues, financial and legitimate viewpoint (Badu and Jeffery, 1993).

Various women’s welfare organizations were formed to politically engage women for demanding due status in social construction, educational facilities, marriage and social work issues related protection, etc. Among them “All Pakistan Women Association” (APWA) was a prominent woman-oriented organization which worked for the economic development, young mother’s club, domestic violence, legal and political participation of women. APWA, Young Women Christian Association (YWCA), Pakistan Girls Guide, Pakistan Red Cross Society and Family Planning Association were formed in 1953. APWA worked hard on advocating women’s inheritance rights that were denied by society, not by Islam. Muhammad Ali Bogra’s second marriage received a lot of criticism from the liberal minded women’s wings, many political agents criticized the existing marriage, divorce, children custody and maintenance law however, these proposals were rejected by the orthodox wings of the Parliament. Nevertheless, most of these issues were addressed in the 1961 Muslim Marriage Law ordinance such as marriage and divorce issues.

The 1956 constitution entitled women with the right of suffrage. Another important feature in the 1956 constitution was the Charter of Women’s rights dealt with the right of equal representation, equal status as men and equal wages. In the

constitution of 1956, women's representation was dual; separate voting for general and reserved seats. However, this allocation was cancelled in 1962's constitution and the similar status was not revived in 1973's constitution.

The Second Stage of Islamization: Ayub Khan's regime, Contrasting Approaches and Convenient Islam

Governor General Iskandor Mirza under his stakes decided to abrogate the Constitution of 1956 and asked Field Marshal Ayub Khan to impose martial law. The first martial law was proclaimed in October 1958 in Pakistan. General Ayub Khan (1958-1969) was not at all an Islamist in his orientation, though his illegitimate rule needed the certain base to validate his stay in power. Islam was first used as a policy measure under Ayub Regime to overcome the crisis of legitimacy. He did not consider the masses of Pakistan capable of handling a British style democracy. This led Ayub Khan to introduce a system of controlled democracies that largely designed to strengthen his personal rule. The Constitutional framework of 1962 was also an endeavour to consolidate the powers of president.

Despite all biases and political authoritarianism of Ayub regime, the decade of 1960s remained significant for women-oriented laws and policies. In spite of political intent of these policies and their operational value, second stage of the Islamization process pronounced mix records of development. Women were largely encouraged to progress in the education sector and workforce. Certain new educational policies, first aid training, self-defence and vocational training induced prospects to empower women as Ayub regime pronounced that "Women must accept the responsibility" of creating the ideal citizen. On the political front, under 1962's constitution women were enfranchised so that they could actively participate in the Basic democracies elections. The Article 20 of the Constitution of 1962 provided six seats reserved for women in the National Assembly (NA) and five seats in the Provincial legislatures¹.

The enactment of 'Muslim Family Laws Ordinance (MFLO) in 1961 was one of the significant development which infused social change to some extent. This ordinance was an attempt to provide progressive explanation of Muslim laws as it comprehensively discussed the long-abandoned issues related to women (Bloom, 1995) mainly to limit polygamy. In addition to Family Laws, the Child Marriage Restraint Act and Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act were also endorsed in 1961 to discourage polygamy and protect the rights of wives. West Pakistan Family Act was also incorporated in 1964, which enhanced women legal rights by providing the "provisions for the establishment of family courts for the expeditious settlement and disposal of dispute of marriage and family affairs. Despite the progressive orientations of (MFLO) 1961, it largely failed to bring desired outcome. The underlying reason was insufficient penalty for polygamy, an ineffective mechanism to discourage second marriage and lack of compensation for women as a result of divorce. These family laws had drawn much criticism from the religious orthodox group, especially from three Islamic scholars "Dr Nooruddin Jami of Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Naib Amir of Jamia Ashrafiya, Lahore, and Dr Mufti Ghulam Sarwar Qadri of Jamia Rizvia, Lahore", by asserting that such kind of laws would encourage extra-marital affairs.

¹ National Assembly of Pakistan. Retrieved from <http://www.na.gov.pk/en/content.php?id=7>

Furthermore, they claimed that these policies were clearly against the Islamic injunctions, especially the sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 of the ordinances appeared contradictory to Islam and if implemented, it would demolish the exiting equilibrium of the society by upsetting the traditional gender roles and sphere (Langrial and Shah, 2004).

The absence of democratic practices under Ayub regime diminished the prospects of his progressive policies to elevate women's status. Moreover, these so-called pro-women progress seemed a failure when Fatima Jinnah (sister of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, father of the nation) announced to contest presidential election against Ayub Khan. Fatima Jinnah's nomination as a candidate for the election of the Head of state unfolded the discrepancies of theoretical underpinning and political necessities of both Islamist and liberals. The Jamiat Islami (JI) in 1950s criticized Ms Jinnah for appearing in public and violating the tradition of pardah (Munson and Nasr, 1994).

These were political realities, which led Syed Abul A'la Maududi, Ameer of JI to join Combined Opposition Parties (COP) against Ayub Khan while asserting that backing Ms Jinnah was the need of the time. Furthermore, JI stressed that it did not compromise its ideological stand and political support provided to Ms Fatima Jinnah was made under the extraordinary conditions. Prof. Dr. Khurshid Ahmed, Naib Ameer of JI also explicated that their political support for Ms Fatima Jinnah was an "exception rather than a norm, and that it wasn't necessarily the ideal situation". Ayub Khan, despite his pronounced claims of modernization and women's development, did not act much differently from Islamist. His co-option to get legitimacy of his rule managed to issue various fatwas (religious declaration about certain matters by Islamic scholars) from Muslim clerics against Ms Jinnah asserting that woman cannot be a Head of the state. This contrasting mode of Islamization persisted at societal, political and state level clearly expounded that it is not the character but gender that matters.

Third Phase of Islamization: Religion as a Constitutionally Potent Force

The third phase of Islamization in Pakistan was originated from the 1970 general elections. Religious parties succeeded to get eighteen seats out of total three hundred in the National Assembly (Lower Chamber of Pakistani Federation). The emergence of Islamist parties in electoral politics made them capable of forming the coalition government in two provinces. General Yahya Khan's regime backed the Islamist elements to counter the antiestablishment sentiments and challenges resulting from Bhutto's popularity in West Pakistan and Mujib ur-Rehman's charisma in East Pakistan. These developments led to shape the role of a political Islam in politics and society of Pakistan (Waseem, 2004). Yasmeen expounds that these were the early years of the decade of the 1970s, which marked the commencement of a traditionalist approach of asserting their ideas in politics (Yasmeen, 2006).

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto emerged as a progressive leader largely represented the modernist paradigm. His socialist slogan of 'roti, kapra aur makan' became very popular amongst the masses of Pakistan. Under Bhutto regime several developments were made in the areas of politics, constitution, foreign policy and women empowerment. Despite all his devotion to progressive measures and modernist approach to citizenship, he too relied on Islamic symbols and support from

traditionalists to stay in power². His political discourse was Islamic Socialism by which he tried to incorporate the demands of traditionalists with a modern approach. Constitution of 1973 was drafted with a broader consensus and unanimously passed. The article 25 and 26 of the Constitutional framework of 1973 significantly articulated the equality of citizens irrespective of religion and gender. Through the induction of Islamic provisions in the constitution³ clearly institutionalized religion as political and constitutional potent force (Hashm, 2009). The consequences of Islamization by a modernist leader like Bhutto were devastatingly visible until 1977 elections where religion emerged as the central theme of national discourse.

Fourth Phase of Islamization: Religion as a Defining Feature of State and Society

The arrival of General Zia-ul-Haq into political power in Pakistan was made through imposition of a martial law, deposition of an elected Prime Minister and his execution (later known as judicial killing) through manipulation and influence. His Islamization process was originated from an anti-Bhutto movement by hijacking the Islamic slogan of the opposition alliance. In July 1977, Zia introduced Nizam-e-Mustafa (system or rule of the prophet), which further established Nizam-e-Islam (system of Islam) in Pakistan (Jasam, 2008). To stay in power; Zia needed support from masses which only seemed possible in case of collaboration with the right wing Islamist parties to get an appeal in the name of enforcing religion (Rouse, 1988). He extended his rule by introducing the Shariah Law, which primarily dismantled the whole legal structure and political institutions. This military regime brought the preponderance of traditionalists by maintaining a de facto alliance with Islamist parties, especially JI under the leadership of Moulana Maududi (Maududi, 1977).

Islamization in this era was not only confined to inserting some Islamic provisions in the constitution, but it included the regulation and conformity of civil laws, politics, socio-economic, civic and personal life with the view of Islam largely defined by the Zia regime (Korson and Maskiell, 1985). Maskiel believes that Islamization during the Zia's regime was largely symbolic⁴ primarily directed at political intent rather than religious objectives. Under the Zia regime, religion was conversed as significant state discourse where the formulation of women related laws were largely aimed to divert the focus from the immediate issues of politics and the economy which were yet not settled even after accusing a popular elected leader. It has been argued earlier that Zia's Islamization was aimed to obtain legitimacy of his rule and women were not the prime target of his policies, but it was his informal alliance with traditionalist which led to bring state sponsored policies to enforce Islam symbolically. The political power of religious- political parties grew immensely during the Zia regime which inevitably enhanced their influence on society to redefine the parameters of the role and status of gender.

The Traditionalist viewed women as the symbolic face of religion which must be corrected on priority on every religious revival movement. Following the same trends, Zia's Islamization lacked the enforcement of other significant Islamic

² Z. A. Bhutto declared Friday as the weekly holiday. His foreign policy included close ties with Saudi Arabia. In 1973 he hosted the Islamic summit. Bhutto declared Ahmadis as non-Muslim. Thus Bhutto also used Islam when it suited his political purposes.

³ Constitution of 1973, Part IX, Article 227 maintains that 'all existing law shall be brought in conformity with injunctions of Islam as laid in the holy Quran and Sunnah.

⁴ These symbolic expressions were found by an introduction of Islamic Banking, establishing a Federal Shariat Court and Identifying the Parliament as *Majlis-i-Shura*

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practices such as social justice, equality before the law, a just distribution of wealth and accountability. Moral purification targeted the weaker part of society which were no doubt women and minorities. In the context of gender, Zia's policies were highly discriminating and almost revered those rights which were granted previously. Zia's regime seemed to be obsessed with political re-Islamization of women. It seemed quite evident on Haddood Ordinance which soon became an instrument to exercise power against women. It included an act of 'Zina' (adultery) as a punishable offence. In case of adultery, women had been found guilty of Zina on the basis of their pregnancies, but man remained free for not having conclusive proof. Moreover, Zina was categorized as an offense against the state not against the husband. These steps were taken to limit women in four walls and constrained their legal and political rights. The government-initiated media campaign to encourage others to observe their surroundings and a number of incidents were registered where men confronting women on how they dressed, in some cases women were even slapped or physically abused by unknown men. Couples were stopped and were asked for their relation identification. Sari was considered inappropriate dress and Government issued orders to wear, chaddar at work place. In Pakistan, the phenomena of gender disparity have existed since long before, however, with Zia Ul Haq's Islamization policies, this concept reached to the zenith. According to Ayesha Jalal, women were the prime victim in the Islamization process where with regressive legislation; woman's identity was limited to demarcate the boundaries of the Muslim community. During his address to the country, President Zia had reported that the sanctity of purdah (cover/veil) and the security of ladies in the four dividers (walls) of their homes would be ensured (Naz and Rehman, 2011).

Results

Finding #1: This study concluded that women related laws had been the product of diverse factors predominantly religion. The gradual development of religion as a potent force in politics and society provided symbolic and legal changes which made women not only "lesser citizen" but deprived them of state protection. The fourth phase of Islamization in Pakistan harvested a societal change where religion significantly dominated the social discourse by primarily considering it as a state matter rather than a personal issue. During the post Zia period, though Islamization was not state sponsored however, it reached to the grass root level of Pakistani society. Policies of "Tokenism" were continued and only symbolic measures had been taken to enhance women empowerment⁵. The four altering civilian governments of Pakistan people's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) during the decade of the 1990s did not make any serious effort to repeal the Hudood Ordinance and they remained reluctant to redress the legal justice for women. It was also due to the fear of strong resistance from the right wing parties, which made these governments hesitant to remove these controversial laws from the statute book.

The trends of incorporating women-oriented laws into the legal system were followed by civilian government of PPP in the post Musharraf era by introducing a series of Women Protection Bill specifically in 2011. One of the significant and latest developments was 'Women Protection against Violence Act' with Pakistan's

⁵ During the two terms (1988-1990 and 1993- 1996) of first woman prime minister, Benazir Bhutto upgraded the women's division to the status of a ministry, established a women bank, police stations managed by women and program of lady health visitors.

largest province Punjab's legislation in 2016, which was also considered as un-Islamic by cleric and religious political leadership. Under this Act, women were provided an unprecedented legal protection from "domestic and sexual violence, as well as emotional abuse". However, this Act was also strongly resisted by mainstream religious political parties irrespective of differentiation of their school of thoughts over the interpretation of religion. Fazlur Rehman, a prominent religious leader and head of Jamiat-I-Ulema Islam (JUI-F) explicated the respective law as un-Islamic while expounding that "This law makes a man insecure. This law is an attempt to make Pakistan a Western colony again". The head of the 'Council of Islamic Ideology' (a government advisory body) Mohammad Khan Sherani also declared this Act as un-Islamic on the behalf of Council.

Finding # 2: Political and religious parties addressed the women issues to converse the state discourses within the Islamic parameters. This was particularly evident in case of Nawaz Sharif (Prime Minister-Pakistan), who came into power in 1990's with the help of religious-political parties by leading an alliance called IJI (Islamic Jamhuri Itihad). This indicated that in case of abolishing these anti women laws, they might lose the political support from religious-political parties, which hampered any breakthrough in protecting women's rights. The unresolved issues emerging out of Islamization paradox led to raise further controversial issues like "Halala" and the right of the women's guardians in the marriage, which further bifurcated the society on the interpretation of religious matters (Ahmed, 1996). The Pakistani civilian government (under prime minister Benazir Bhutto) of 1990s openly recognized the Taliban rule in Afghanistan under military espoused 'strategic depth doctrine', which brought devastating results in later years and strengthen the roots of militancy in Pakistan.

The lack of law and order as a result of constant political shocks and breakdowns from 1988 and onwards provided enough space for many local Islamist groups to act as "state within state" in the name of dispensing justice. This led them to aggressively impose their interpretation of Shariah at local level, especially in certain areas of KPK province and Tribal belt. It is important to note that state patronage provided by Zia's regime to Islamist groups and parties resulted as an armed competition between these groups causing sectarian violence throughout 1990s. The massive incidents of sectarian violence and killings during 1990's and in the later decade emergence of brutal form of terrorism as suicide attacks burdened, and affected many women as in the cases of loss of their male guardians as breadwinner, they became a victim of increased poverty and economic deprivation. Furthermore, Pakistani society had been plagued by a high rate of honor killing.

Despite the pronounced enlightenment approach of General Pervez Musharraf after taking charge of political power as Chief Executive, he, too politically co-opted with religious political parties to legitimize his rule. This political co-option brought an alliance of religious political parties, MMA (Mutihda Majlis-e-Amal) into power by forming provincial governments in the provinces of KPK and Baluchistan as a result of 2002 elections. After taking charge of provincial governments in two provinces (Blochistan and KPK), their prime focus was introduction of an Islamic bill to enforce "Taliban" style society policing. Soon their efforts were materialized by introducing "Hasba bill" as in June 2003, under MMA led government, the KPK provincial assembly passed legislation to implement Shariah law in the province. Further, on 11 July 2005, the draft of 'Hasba Bill' was tabled in the KPK provincial

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assembly which was also passed by the provincial legislature. Though this was later struck down by the Supreme Court of Pakistan by declaring it as unconstitutional on the bases of the discrepancy with the existing legal system under the Constitution of 1973.

Despite the fact that Hasba Bill aimed to adopt some of the optimum measures of protecting women's rights like discouraging the honor killing, protecting women inheritance rights and ensuring the practice of dowry according to Islamic codes, it didn't offer women protection against gender related abuses. Though at the same time its intent of Islamization of society and 'Mohtasib' unchecked powers of monitoring the Islamic practices made it controversial. It is important to note that Islamization proved to be a vague process in Pakistan which makes it complex to define the extent of practicing Islamic values and its observance by state authorities. A research by Brookings institute explicates that "When the state fails to deliver, Islamist groups have the ability to mould any tradition or law according to their own interpretation in the name of religion in order to create local order and influence governance" (Zaidu, 2016). This explanation seems appropriate in the case of Pakistan as in later decades, many of the non-state actors became able to challenge the authority of the state. This was evident when terrorist and religiously radical movements of 'Tehreek Nifaz Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) in the Swat district and Tehreek Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in both Swat and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) penetrated into local societies on the question of justice and reconstituted local orders based on their religious elucidation largely parallel to state laws. Due to their assertion on Islamic laws and its existing appeal to many people around the tribal belt made these Islamist groups larger in the terms of influence that civilian government in 2009 was forced to provide them the concession by recognizing their brand of Shariah by enforcing the "Nazim-e-Adal Regulations" in Malakand division while initiating negotiations with these militants (Fenton, 2016).

Finding # 3: This research shows that religious based women identity in Pakistan made them vulnerable to discrimination and violence. According to Washington Post, almost 1000 women had been killed in Pakistan in the name of honor. In year 2011, 943 women were killed and 869 was the number of women murder victims in 2013 (Mocoy, 2014). These figures do not reflect the actual multitude of cases of violence and discrimination against women based on gender, as there are large numbers of unreported incidents that are covered up by the family members under the social stigma. Art Foundation, a renowned NGO working for the women's rights estimates that almost "8,500 women face violence in the country every year"— most of these cases are the result of domestic violence and remain outside the jurisdiction process in the name of family privacy (Hassan and Farooq, 2016). Under Musharraf regime, from a representational aspect though women's political participation was increased from 2 percent to 20 percent of National and provincial assemblies while 33 percent in local bodies, However, almost 31 percent women from KPK and Baluchistan were strongly discouraged to cast their votes by existing local societal norms. In the 2008 general elections in Pakistan, encouraging trends regarding women voting had not been observed as there were 564 polling stations where not a single woman casted her vote and almost similar trends of "Zero turnout in women respective polling stations persisted in 2013 general elections.

Finding # 4: The successive governments in Pakistan considered gender disparities and violence as established norms. The incidents of violence and discrimination

against women were highly alarming as these were recognized as part of social life at the societal level and still any law or piece of legislation related to women protection was strongly rejected by considering it contrary to Islamic provisions by the previous governments. It is imperative to note that pro-women legislation in Pakistan generate insecurity among men as these provide prospects of upsetting the dominant status of male members of society and therefore it is more convenient for men to counter these laws by considering them anti-Islamic and precarious to the family system. The anti-domestic violence laws are largely viewed as un-Islamic in Pakistan and whenever such initiatives are pronounced by the legislatures, these are discouraged in name of violating the Islamic value system.

It is interesting to note that any significant legislation related to women protection against violence and abuses was not initiated by any democratic government in the post-Zia era, but it was the military regime of General Musharraf which commenced the process repealing discriminatory laws against women. 'Protection of Women Act (PWA) 2006 was such a measure which, though, didn't provide landmark development, but eventually it paved grounds for debating women oriented issues on legislative forum. This act only 'amended the offenses of Zina Ordinance and the offense of Qazaf (Perjury) and remaining Ordinances of 1979 were unaltered. Gender disparities in Pakistan are largely the results of cultural norms and societal patterns, but these are primarily augmented by the Islamization process by reinforcing the traditional roles, avoiding Islamic practices regarding women's rights prescribed in the Quran and twisting the religious commands by various versions of Islamic interpretation. This paper expounds that though Islamization in Pakistan neither intended to increase the gender disparities nor its intent was women centred, however policies under the Islamizations process asserted to reinforce women's roles in accordance of social practices as part of its moral purification of Pakistani society.

It is of the essence that despite all challenges, progressive measures are gradually emerging in Pakistan as women are placed in ambassadorial positions in other countries, getting opportunities of professional education and economic participation. Pro-women legislation and protection measures are increasingly incorporated in Pakistan's legal system which is evident by making milestone developments as "Prevention of Anti-Women Practices 2011 Bill, Acid Control and Acid Crimes Prevention 2011 Bill, and The Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2011" were passed by the Pakistani Parliament. Moreover, an anti-honor-killing bill has been passed on October 6, 2016, which closed the loopholes of previous laws of 2005. It is a matter of fact that at operational level these laws and acts, yet didn't bring desirable results to secure women's rights though these measures developed the prospects to view women-oriented issues from a humanistic perspective rather than a monitoring through a religious dowl.

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