

## Examining the Effectiveness of Women Senators in Legislative Business (2012-2015)

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Article Information	Abstract
Received: October 08, 2024 Revised: October 21, 2024 Accepted: October 21, 2024	This study provides analysis of efficacy of women senators in legislation during 2012-2015, emphasizing their influence on policies, legislative cooperation, and overall engagement in the Upper House. It examines contribution of women in legislation, engagement in debates, and participation in bills, motions, resolutions, rising questions and calling attention notices. This study examines the period 2012-2015, during which women influenced considerable legislative reforms despite their numerical scarcity. The study addresses the question, in what ways female senators affected legislative processes and outcomes as compared to male Senators? A mixed-methods technique is utilized for this study as quantitative analysis of legislative records of bills introduced, co-sponsored, motions, resolutions, rising questions and calling attention notices. This analysis is enhanced by qualitative records from primary sources including Senate's Hansards. The study unfolded that, women not only augmented legislation proposals but also improved the caliber of debate and negotiation, implying a notable transformation during this period. The women proficiently advanced projects and championing matters pertaining to gender equality and social welfare of female specifically. They employed collaborative strategies and promoted an inclusive legislative atmosphere, and their distinct viewpoints enhanced policymaking that catered the requirements of varied constituents. The study underscores that women's inclusion resulted in transformation of legislative dynamics, with heightened attention to issues that were overlooked in male-dominated discourse. The study suggests increasing women representation in legislative positions, highlighting that augmenting women's involvement can fortify democratic processes and enhance policy efficacy.
<b>Keywords</b> <i>Senate of Pakistan</i> <i>Women's Participation</i> <i>Legislative Business</i> <i>Female Advocacy</i> <i>Leadership</i>	

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### 1 Introduction

The women's role in democracies extends beyond socio-cultural contributions to encompass vital involvement in legislative processes. Since its inception, Pakistan adopted British legacy in parliamentary system so women had a negligible presence in the Parliament of Pakistan. However, in the beginning of 21st century, the situation was improved as women had actively participated in the

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legislative process. The 1973 Constitution instituted a bicameral legislature, in which women's representation, particularly in the Senate, had remained limited.

The quota system implemented by Pervez Musharraf improved women's representation in Parliament that proved helpful to raise number of women senators who participated actively in legislative affairs. This study assesses female senators' efficacy in Senate including their contributions to legislation, advocacy, and policy reform. This research analyzes how women senators utilized their positions to influence legislation and highlighted the challenges faced in a primarily male political environment. This study utilizes qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyze the raised question.

The study includes the number of legislation, resolutions, motions, and inquiries proposed or supported by female senators from Senate records, public databases, and official reports that are primary sources of study. The parliamentary discussions comprehensively examined and legislative outcomes are assessed to see the impact of their contributions. Through quantitative approach the study analyzes the volume of legislative initiatives led by women, while the qualitative component explores the significance and impact of their contributions.

## 2 Literature Review

Research in political science had thoroughly examined women's participation in legislative processes, focusing on the influence of gender diversity on law-making and governance. Numerous academicians emphasized the importance their representation in legislative bodies for achieving gender equality and fostering inclusive governance. They demonstrated that women offer distinct perspectives in the policy-making process, especially regarding social justice, health, and education (Krook, 2009; Celis et al., 2013). Dahlerup (1988) posited that achieving a "critical mass" of women, typically about 30%, is vital for implementing substantial policy developments and changes. However, women must have the ability to actively engage in legislation to make meaningful contributions as just numerical representation is inadequate.

In Pakistan, women's participation had historically been hindered by socio-cultural norms and patriarchal actions. Through introducing quota systems, Pakistan's progress in improving female representation and their participation remained inadequate even in achieving fair representation. Shvedova (2005) argued that introduction of quota significantly improved women's representation, but their full integration into the legislative process still faces challenges, including bias and inadequate support from male colleagues.

The legislation introduced by women indicated that female legislators often emphasized issues affecting women, children, and underprivileged groups. Franceschet and Piscopo's (2008) study revealed that females prioritize social welfare legislation, particularly in health care, education, and gender-based violence. Similarly, Childs and Krook (2009) found that women advocate for legislation related to women's rights, gender equality, and family welfare generally.

Bari (2010) added that women Parliamentarians have advocated for law reforms related to child marriage, domestic violence, and workplace harassment mostly. Though they have numerical constraints, but effectively impacted substantial legislative improvements through active participation in parliamentary debates and committees. He stated that female MPs have substantially enhanced legislation, but their influence was often diminished by male legislators due to patriarchal society. The quotas had increased women's representation, but the challenge remains as it is in empowering female parliamentarians to act as effective agents of change within the legislative framework. The gender quota's implementation has been a vital approach in increasing women's involvement as in 2002, Pakistan instituted women quota, designating 17% of Senate seats and 22% of National Assembly seats for female representation. Zia and Bari (1999) asserted that cultural, religious, and socio-economic factors hindered women's participation in legislative processes majorly in Pakistan.

Kanwal, Alvi, and Iqbal (2021) investigated the discrepancy between political pledges and the actual women empowerment facts in Pakistan. The study evaluated political involvement of women since inception of Pakistan to 2008, highlighting the efforts of several Governments to enhance women's representation. Despite constitutional protections for women's rights, the persistence of patriarchal barriers and limited political engagement is alarming. The writers emphasized the importance of practical steps for women empowerment in political and socio-economic spheres, advocating for improved legislation and reforms.

Tabassum et al. (2014) investigated about women representation in the Senate and found that female senators proactively introduced legislation related to social welfare, health, and education. This research indicated that they substantially advanced women's rights, but their impact was often constrained by institutional limits and inadequate support from male colleagues.

A research article "Women's Participation in the Legislative Process of the Senate of Pakistan (2015-2018): A Historical Analysis" by Iqbal et al. (2021) examined women Senators' engagement in legislative business and their contributions during 2015-2018. Notwithstanding the limited females in Senate, the study highlighted their significant impact, especially in the formulation of legislation, resolutions, and motions. It contended that women's involvement, despite being quantitatively restricted, was vital in shaping legislative outcomes under Mian Raza Rabbani's leadership as their active engagement and initiatives to improve women's representation are witnessed.

Similarly, in "Legislation for Women's Rights in Pakistan: Considering the Dynamic Role of the Senate Committees (2018-2021)" by Aslam, Mubashar, and Iqbal (2024), the authors examined the Senate's role in advancing women's rights, highlighting the functions in committees. It underscored that Pakistan, within a patriarchal framework, had achieved notable legislative advancements in gender equality, especially via the Senate Committees on Law and Justice, Human Rights, and Federal Education. Despite the absence of a specific women's rights committee, the committees tackled a range of gender-sensitive problems. The analysis indicated that, although improvement has occurred, more robust enforcement of legislation and heightened public awareness are essential for continued advancement.

### **3 Discussion/Analysis**

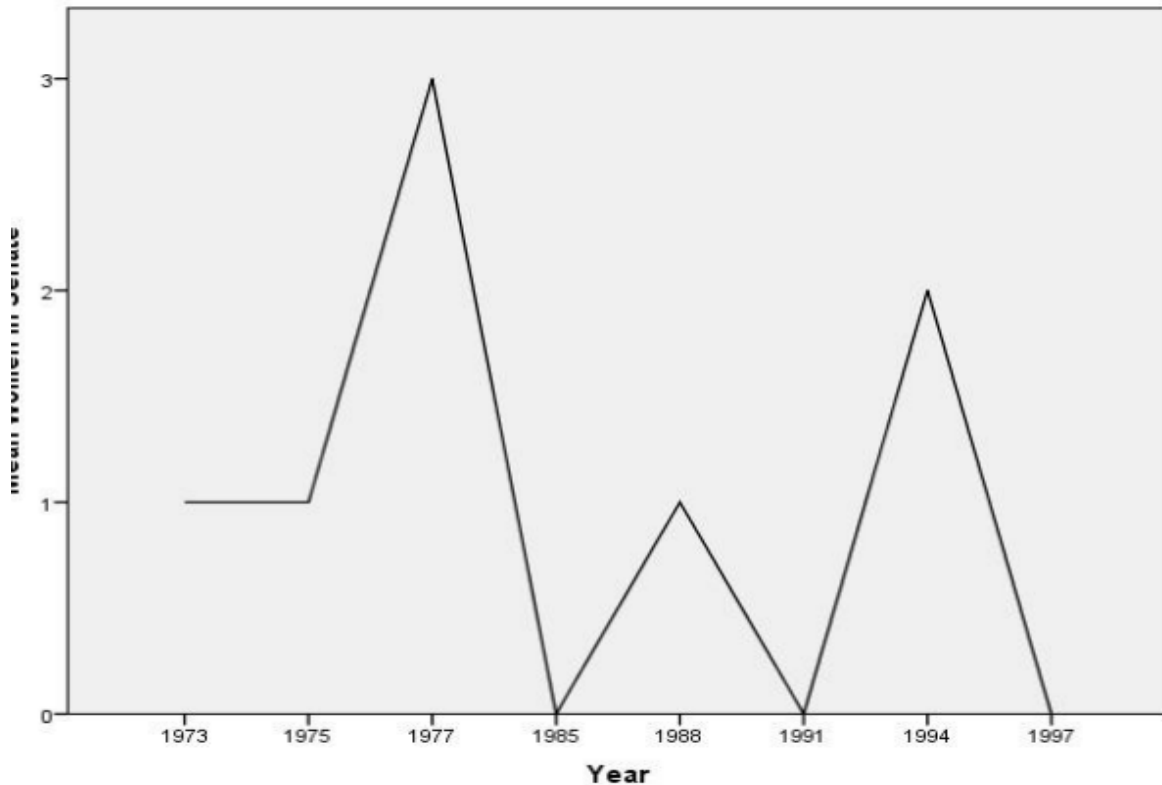
#### **3.1 Representation of Women in the Senate: A Historical Review (1973-2012)**

The representation of women in Pakistan's Senate remained marginalized since its inception in 1973 until the inception of quota in Musharraf era. Initially, the Senate lacked legislative mechanisms for women's inclusion, mirroring prevailing societal conventions that constrained their participation. The Senate was constituted under the 1973 Constitution and at the outset, there were no designated seats for women, and their presence was virtually nonexistent.

In first elections of Senate for interval of two years (1973-1975), there were total 45 seats and only one woman, Miss Saima Usman from Punjab, was elected to the Senate (Pakistan, Members' List, 1973-1975). In second elections for 1975-1977 Senate, the House expanded to 63 seats, with only one woman, Miss Asifa Farooqi from Punjab, elected (Pakistan, Members' List, 1975-1977).

The third elections for the tenure 1977-1979, experienced a modest boost in women's participation. Three women were elected to the Senate including Miss Asifa Farooqi, Begum Aziza Hamayun Mirza, and Mrs. Bibi Perveen (Pakistan, Members' List, 1977). Nevertheless, Zia's martial law in 1977 abolished Parliament of Pakistan, which further obstructed women's active political participation (Iqbal et al., 2021). Under General Zia-ul-Haq's administration, women's representation was limited despite certain advances in the national and provincial parliament. The 1985 elections resulted in no women being elected to the Senate. Following the Senate's reinstatement in 1985, women were once more marginalized.

In 1988's elections for the years 1988-1991, Dr. Noor Jehan Panazai from Balochistan was the sole woman elected. However, she created history as the inaugural female Deputy Chairperson of the Senate (Carpineta, 2007). For 1991-1994 no other women was won in 1991 elections so presence remained limited, with Dr. Noor Jehan Panazai as the only female senator as she was elected for six years in 1988. In 1994 elections Senator were chosen for three years (1994-1997), witnessed that new women were elected to the Senate. Ms. Fiza Junejo (PML-J) and Mrs. Nasreen Jalil (MQM) served as representatives for Sindh (Pakistan, Members' List, 1994-1997). They participated actively in the Senate's legislative procedures. In 1996, Senate's by elections held and Begum Nadira Khan Khakwani elected from Punjab for a period less than five months. (22nd September 1996 to 20th March 1997) (Tabassum, Afzal, Taherani, & Tabassum, 2014). While for the years (1997-2000), elections 1997 witnessed no addition to women seats.



**Figure 1: Total Number of Women Elected (1973-1997)**

Source: (Iqbal et al., 2021)

The graph illustrated the total involvement of women in the Senate of Pakistan from 1973 to 1999. This graph revealed that the representation of women in the Senate was at its nadir, with a maximum of three women and a minimum of zero during the span of 27 years. The male-dominated Senate dissuaded women's involvement.

In 1999, General Pervez Musharraf proclaimed emergency and abolished Parliament of Pakistan, which was restored in 2002 with initiation of National Assembly and Senate in 2003. During his administration, a notable alteration occurred with the implementation of a 17% quota for women in the Senate. This signified a crucial juncture for women's political engagement. The elections 2003 held for the interval (2003-2006), so quota led to the election of women to the Senate, marking the largest representation of women in Pakistan's history at that time. It included Abida Saif Advocate (MQM), Dr. Nighat Agha (PML), Fauzia Fakhar-uz-Zaman Khan (PML), Gulshan Saeed (PML), Mumtaz Bibi (MMA), Nighat Mirza Advocate (MQM), Roshan Khursheed Bharucha (PML), Shereen Noor from Balochistan, and Tanveer Khalid (PML) (Pakistan, Members' List, 2003-2006). The nine Members elected for 2003-2009 included Rozina Alam Khan (PML-Q), Tahira Latif (PML-Q),

Yasmeen Shah (PML-Q), Kulsoom Perveen (PML-Q), Rukhsana Zuberi (PPP), Dr. Saadia Abbasi (PML-N), Agha Pari Gul (PML), Anisa Zeb Tahirkheli (PPP-S) and Dr. Kausar Firdoos (MMA) (Pakistan, Members' List, 2003-2009).

In elections 2006 for the tenure (2006-2012), women's representation was robust with eight women elected to reserved seats. The members comprised Fauzia Fakhhar-uz-Zaman (PML-Q), Afia Zia (JIP), Gulshan Saeed (PML), Nilofar Bakhtiar (PML), Ratna Bhagwandas Chawla (PPPP), Rehana Yahya Baloch (PML), Sabina Rauf (JUIP), and Semeen Yusuf Siddiqui (PML) (Pakistan, Members' List, 2006-2012). Similarly, in elections 2009 for the period of 2009-2015, which also included the women senators that were present during 2012-2015, witnessed the inclusion of Almas Parveen (PPPP), Begum Najma Hameed (PMLN), Farah Aqil (ANP), Farhat Abbas (PPPP), Saeeda Iqbal (PPPP), Shirala Mallick (MQM), Suriya Amiruddin (PPPP), and Syeda Sughra Hussain Imam (PPPP) (Pakistan, Members' List, 2009-2015). While in 2012 elections Khalida Parveen (PPPP), Naseema Ehsan (BNP-A), Nasreen Jalil (MQM), Nuzhat Sadiq (PMLN), Rubina Irfan (PML), Rubina Khalid (PPPP), Sehar Kamran (PPPP), and Zahida Khan (ANP) were elected (Pakistan, Members' List, 2012-2018).

### 3.2 Women's Participation in Legislative Process during 2012-2015

In the course of 2012 to 2015, female senators participated in the legislative affairs. This part examines their participation in presentation of legislation, inquiries, motions, resolutions, amendments, and private member bills. The data is extracted from Senate's Hansards.

#### 3.2.1 Legislative Bills and Female Senators' Participation in Introducing Bills

Legislative bills are proposals for new legislation or amendments in laws existing in the country. The legislators present it in legislative bodies, such as the National Assembly or Senate in case of Pakistan. These legislations are essential for policy development, legal gap resolution, and the formalization of societal progress and it addresses a variety of issues, including economic shifts, social equity, public health, and infrastructure enhancement. Upon presentation, this legislative instrument subjected to comprehensive discussion, debate, and revisions in some cases, before obtaining approval from legislative institutions. This practice is essential for effective democratic system, allowing representatives to propose legislation that reflects the interests and ambitions of their constituents.

In this context, female senators sponsored and introduced that were often pertained to issues of social welfare and criminal legislation. The total bills presented were as follow:

**Table 1: Bills Presented in Senate and Contribution of Women Senators**

Legislative Activity	Total Number	Proposed by Women	Percentage
Bills Introduced	43	7	16.27%

Source: Debates of Senate of Pakistan

The table depicts that 43 legislations were introduced, 7 of which were proposed by women, which identifies that women were responsible for introducing approximately 16.27% of the total bills. These statistics demonstrated women's involvement in bills processing, offering insight into their contribution to shaping the legal framework through proposed legislation.

Senate, during 2012-2015, undertook a concerted initiative to propose and implement various issues affecting the country. The Senate significantly impacted Pakistan's legal and policy framework by implementing important legislation for human rights, economic development, and security. Legislation put forth by males and females aided this campaign; however, the statistics revealed that the representation of women was relatively low, indicating an underrepresentation in legislative participation.

This underrepresentation signified issues of gender disparity in political participation, underscoring the need for enhanced inclusivity of women as well as their empowerment in legal framework. Despite several challenges, Pakistan's Senate made progress in multiple areas, enacting reforms and legislation to address critical national issues. Yet, the statistics unveiled that there was still opportunity for enhancing women's participation in legislative leadership. The bills introduced by female Senators were:

**Table 2: Bills Proposed by Female Senators**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Presented by</b>	<b>Sponsorship</b>	<b>Year</b>
<b>The Review of Innocence Claims Bill 2012</b>	Nasreen Jaleel, Syed Tahir Hussain Mashhadi and Dr. Muhammad Farogh Naseem	Joint	2012
<b>The Anti-Rape Laws (Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill, 2013</b>	Syeda Sughra Imam	Individually	2014
<b>The Civil Servants (Amendment) Bill, 2013</b>			
<b>The Privatization Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2013</b>			
<b>The Privatization Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2014</b>			
<b>The Anti-Honor Killing Laws (Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill, 2014</b>			
<b>The Civil Servants (Amendment) Bill, 2014</b>			

Source: Debates of Senate of Pakistan

This table clarifies the legislative activity put forth by female senators and underscores the substantial contributions of women in legislation and also accentuated their overall underrepresentation during this period.

In 2012, the "Review of Innocence Claims Bill, 2012" was introduced collectively by female and male Senators. This bill was a cooperative effort, illustrating a cohesive strategy for addressing issues about legal basis of innocence claims. It aimed to investigate and amend probable wrongful convictions that would pave way for strengthening justice and human rights within Pakistan's judicial system.

Syeda Sughra Imam, a prominent female senator, independently introduced multiple bills as in 2014 she introduced six bills individually. She proposed Anti-Rape Laws, a legislative initiative aimed at preventing rapes in Pakistan by strengthening penalties under criminal statutes. This bill highlighted her commitment to addressing gender-based violence and ensuring justice for survivors. She also presented Civil Servants Bill, Privatization Commission Bill, aiming improving the efficiency and accountability of civil service and privatization processes.

She advanced her legislative efforts by presenting Anti-Honor Killing Laws Bill to address the issue of honor killings. It was essential in prohibition of gender-based violence and the heinous murders of women under the guise of honor. She reintroduced Civil Servants Bill in 2014 by incorporating an additional amendment to the Privatization Commission Act, illustrating her continued focus on administrative and governance reforms.

Despite the notable contributions from Syeda Sughra Imam, the overall women's participation in Senate's legislative process during this period was limited. She discussed critical issues in her legislation like sexual assault, honor killings, and administrative reforms, emphasizing women's ability to provide unique and vital perspectives. Nonetheless, the inadequate representation of women led to a

deficiency in the incorporation of women's opinions in decision-making and obstructed overall progress on gender-related issues in the nation. The year wise bills introduced were as follows:

Table 3: Bills Presented (Year Wise)

Year	Total Bills	Proposed by Woman (Individually)	Proposed by Woman (Jointly)
2012-2013	9	Nil	1
2013-2014	17	6	Nil
2014-2015	17	Nil	Nil

Source: Debates of Senate of Pakistan

This table presents a comprehensive analysis of legislative activities in the Senate of Pakistan during the said period, emphasizing women's participation in the bill proposal process, both individually and collaboratively. The legislative year of Senate is considered from March 12 of a year to March 11 of the next year as Senate elects its members as well as Chairman and Deputy Chairman on March 12 after every three years.

In the legislative year 2012-2013, nine legislations were introduced. Nevertheless, none of these proposals were exclusively introduced by female senators, only one was introduced collaboratively by a female senator and her male counterparts. This indicates a markedly low degree of female involvement throughout this legislative term. The lack of independently sponsored measures underscored the difficulties women encountered in advocating for their legislative agendas in the Senate during this period. Nonetheless, the collaborative endeavor illustrates that women remained active participants, albeit to a lesser extent.

In next parliamentary year 2013-2014, the overall number of measures introduced rose evidently to 17. Significantly, women senators assumed a more prominent role during this period, proposing six legislations independently. This signifies a notable enhancement in women's legislative involvement relative to the prior year. The heightened participation of women during this period could be linked to acknowledging that woman's viewpoints in legislative procedures as all the bills were proposed by Syeda Sughra Imam. It is noteworthy that no measures were jointly introduced by women senators during this period, indicating that although women were advancing individually, coordination with male counterparts on joint ideas may have diminished.

During the legislative year 2014-2015, 17 legislations were introduced, consistent with the preceding year. In contrast to the preceding year, no legislation was introduced either individually or collaboratively by female senators. During this three-year period, women's involvement in the legislative process exhibited considerable variability. The years 2013-2014 had a peak in women's individual engagement, whilst 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 experienced negligible to no individual contributions by women senators. These developments underscored the persistent difficulties in achieving consistent and significant representation.

### 3.2.2 Resolutions

A resolution in a legislative setting is a formal declaration of opinion, intent, or will by a legislative body. It is often non-binding but functions as a means for legislators to articulate viewpoints, suggest actions, or address significant issues without legislating. In the Senate of Pakistan, resolutions serve to address national and international matters, advocate for governmental action, or articulate the Senate's position on many issues.

Resolution enables the Senate to officially convey its perspectives on significant public or policy issues, both local and foreign. It can affect governmental actions by advocating specific policies or conclusions. Although not legally enforceable, they can influence the administration to regard the Senate's perspective. These are frequently adopted to express solidarity with national interests or global issues, indicating the Senate's stance on international events or foreign relations. The Senate might utilize resolutions to underscore areas necessitating new legislation or adjustments to current laws. This may result in the formulation of legislative measures subsequent to the resolution.

The role of resolutions in legislation includes provocation of public or legislative discussion on a specific subject, elevating it to prominence and resulting in the formulation of legislation or governmental measures. It can delineate priority domains necessitating the formulation or amendment of laws. A resolution advocating for the protection of minority rights may result in the druggetting of pertinent legislation. Resolutions also serve as a mechanism for achieving bipartisan agreement on certain problems prior to the initiation of formal legislative procedures. They serve as a forerunner to the formulation and enactment of legislation by assessing the collective sentiment of the Senate.

Table 4: Resolutions Presented (Year Wise)

Year	Total Resolution	Proposed by Woman (Individually)	Proposed by Woman (Jointly)	Passed Resolutions
2012-2013	26	1	Nil	17
2013-2014	27	6	4	18
2014-2015	28	2	3	18
<b>Total</b>	81	9	7	53

Source: Debates of Senate of Pakistan

The table presents the involvement of female senators in introducing resolutions as well as the number put forth by women either individually or collectively, and the count of resolutions that were finally enacted.

During first year, a cumulative total of 26 resolutions were presented in the Senate, with merely one resolution put forth by a woman independently and none submitted collaboratively by females and males. Of the 26 resolutions, 17 were approved which identifies a comparatively low involvement of women in the resolution process during this timeframe, despite a high overall success rate in passing resolutions.

During 2013-2014, the participation of women senators markedly rose. Of the total 27 resolutions, six were individually presented by women and an additional four were proposed jointly with male senators. This indicated a significant increase in women's engagement in legislative affairs. Eighteen of the twenty-seven resolutions were approved, sustaining a robust success percentage akin to the prior year. During the third year, the Senate witnessed 28 resolutions, comprising two resolutions proposed individually by women and three proposed collaboratively. Although individual recommendations by women diminished relative to the prior year, collaborative proposals persisted, indicating cooperation among female senators. Once more, 18 of the 28 resolutions were approved, indicating stability in the parliamentary procedure.

During the three-year period, overall, 81 resolutions were presented in the Senate, of which 53 were enacted. The participation of women is shown to vary, reaching a zenith in the year 2013-2014. Women senators individually proposed 9 resolutions and together proposed 7, underscoring their increasing yet diverse involvement in legislative matters. This data revealed a consistent rate of resolutions passed annually, implying a stable legislative atmosphere in the Upper House.



### 3.2.3 Motions (Individual and Collective)

In parliament, a motion is a formal proposal presented by members, intended to initiate discussion on a specific issue, which might vary from a simple request for discussion on a particular matter to a significant suggestion for a course of action. The motion may lead to votes, discussions, or future actions, depending on its nature and aim. It acts as the impetus for parliamentary discussion and allows senators to introduce critical issues for deliberation related to national policy, governance, or public interest, to tackle rising inflation or national security issues, possibly leading to an extensive debate.

Motions often focus on crucial matters to influence government policy as Senate is empowered to scrutinize the executive branch, enforce accountability, and recommend alterations in policy or action as specific motions need government's response. A motion may require the government to submit a report or take immediate action and these gestures can provoke a government's response or action in the short term. It signifies the need for new legislation or amendments as it may be introduced to amend a shortcoming in the statute protecting workers' rights.

Motions often highlight issues for legislative action and when a motion effectively underscored an issue, it led to the creation of new legislation or amendments. For example, a proposal concerning environmental protection ultimately leads to the establishment of new environmental laws that can serve as a means to assess support for potential legislation. Before introducing a bill, a senator may make a motion to discuss the relevant topic, to get consensus or identify points of disagreement. The Senate can also affect the upcoming legislation via motions.

Female senators submitted motions, both independently and jointly that addressed critical subjects including healthcare, education, government, and gender rights.

**Table 5: Motions Presented in Senate**

Motions	Total Number	Women Participation	Percentage
Individual	80	21	26.25%
Collective	10	3	30%

Source: Debates of Senate of Pakistan

This table presented data regarding submitted motions, highlighting total number of motions, women senators' involvement, and percentage women participated in individual and collective motions. The statistics revealed 80 motions were introduced individually, in which women participated in 21 motions that is 26.25% of the overall motions. This indicated that female senators were actively engaged and contributed more than a quarter of the individual motions presented in Upper House. This degree of participation highlighted the women's growing impact in influencing parliamentary discourse and deliberations on significant matters.

In case of jointly proposed motions, a total of 10 motions were presented and women were engaged in 3, representing 30% of the overall motions. These statistics determined that female senators were engaging with their male colleagues on joint ideas and demonstrated a considerable degree of involvement in collective decision-making. The results revealed that women senators were significantly engaged in both kinds of motions as compared to initiating bills and resolutions. It is also indicated that women were not only independently voicing pertinent topics but also contributed in collaborative efforts in addressing national concerns that augmented their influence in legislation.

### 3.2.4 Calling Attention Notices (Individual and Collective)

A Calling Attention Notice (CAN) is an instrument used to alert government to pressing issues of public significance that enables senators to solicit a quick reply or action from concerned authority over a particular matter. In general, the warning is often sent to a certain ministry and necessitates the minister in charge to furnish explanation on the said issue. CAN is basically an important instrument that may encompass issues such as escalating inflation, declining law and order, or health emergencies.

IN CANs, Senators could ask government for actions or inactions by utilizing process or by compelling ministers to elucidate their policies, actions, or management as it establishes a framework for transparency and examination of governmental activities. The minister in question is liable to address the question during the Senate session, offering a prompt explanation or guarantee of forthcoming corrective measures, in case of unfolded facts. The issue raised in a CAN attracts media scrutiny and enhances public consciousness and exerts further pressure on administration to tackle the issue more efficiently. If numerous CANs are submitted for same issue, it may conclude in implementation of more essential legislation, but it does not mean that it will immediately lead to legislation. The Senators incite the government to undertake urgent measures, which may subsequently be codified through legislation when a minister recognizes the necessity. Women senators in Pakistan used CANs and played crucial role in ensuring government accountability on various issues.

**Table 6: CANs Presented in Senate**

CANs	Total Number	Women Participation	Percentage
Individual	91	22	24.17%
Collective	14	4	28.57%

Source: Debates of Senate of Pakistan

The above-mentioned table presented data regarding CANs submitted, based on overall numbers, the women's participation and their proportion in both kinds, individual and collective CANs. In Senate, during 2012-2015 total 91 CANs were introduced individually in which 22 were introduced by female senators, which was 24.17% of overall CANs. This meant that almost 1/4 CANs were initiated by female Senators. It illustrated their proactive engagement in independently addressing issues and signified their increasing influence in molding parliamentary debates and impacting deliberations on national issues.

In case of collective CANs, 14 were introduced and with their male colleagues 4 collective CANs were presented by females, which was 28.57% of total CANs. This factor indicated that women were engaged individually and significantly in joint endeavors, to sort out the common issues or urgent national affairs. Their involvement in collective motions surpassed individual motions and this factor indicated a propensity for collaboration and cooperative legislative efforts.

### 3.2.5 Starred and Un-starred Questions

In Senate, Starred and Un-starred Questions allows Senators to ask question by requesting information or clarifications on issues of public significance. These are addressed to ministers or governmental departments and constitute a component of parliamentary supervision. A Starred Question necessitates a verbal response while Un-starred Question necessitates a written response during the Senate session. These enquiries help to acquire clear information; although they do not incite a verbal argument, they nonetheless fulfil the function of ensuring governmental accountability.

Both kinds of questions are essential for ensuring governmental accountability and enables senators to examine the acts of ministers and departments, so ensuring transparency in governmental operations. The government is liable to furnish precise and prompt information, fostering transparency and approach guarantees the solution of significant public issues, communicated to government, and promoting a responsive administration. Ministers frequently obligated to elucidate performance of Ministry that incentivizes government personnel to operate with more efficiency, cognizant that their

acts will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny. In the context of Starred Questions, the supplementary questions facilitate a forum for vigorous discussion that may introduce new ideas and wider parliamentary discourse.

Senators discern areas of legislation through questions where it is ambiguous, or improperly enforced that may result in the revision of existing legislation or the establishment of new laws to rectify the discovered deficiencies. It highlights certain deficiencies where governmental policy is inadequate so Senators may propose improvements based on the insights gained from these conversations. The responses also enhance the overarching legislative discourse and when ministers address enquiries, it educates senators and the public of current government activities or the absence of action on particular matters that serves as a foundation for legislative measures. The data and insights offered in response to Un-starred Questions, despite being given in writing, frequently serve as the foundation for subsequent legislative initiatives. A comprehensive written response regarding national infrastructure projects could assist senators in identifying necessary law modifications or financial reallocations.

In case of Questions, women senators were particularly active in holding the government accountable through parliamentary questions.

**Table 7: Questions Presented in Senate**

Questions Type	Total Number	Women Participation	Percentage
Starred	1231	341	27.7%
Un-Starred	302	86	28.47%

Source: Debates of Senate of Pakistan

The table displays the involvement of women senators in Starred and Un-starred Questions. During the specified period, a total of 1,231 Starred Questions were asked and out of these, 341 questions were submitted by female senators, representing 27.7% of the overall total. This signified that female senators had ensured governmental accountability via enquiries. Women’s involvement in around 28% of the Starred Questions indicated their active engagement in Senate discussions, so guaranteeing that their concerns and the issues they presented elicit a public response from the government. The capacity to pose additional enquiries further underscored their impact in fostering in-depth dialogues on critical national issues. In case of Un-starred Questions, 302 questions were posed in which females proposed 86 questions that were 28.47% of overall. This number marginally exceeded that of the Starred Questions, indicating that women were comparably proactive in pursuing comprehensive information.

#### 4 Conclusion

Women participation in politics and governance articulated the gender equality, representation, and empowerment in governing bodies and legislative institutions. From 2012 to 2015, there was increasing focus on evaluating the effectiveness of women senators’ participation in legislation, especially in nations where quota is applicable. The findings present a nuanced assessment of women senators’ legislative efficacy in bills, resolutions, motions, CANs, and Questions. This study found that during the examined time, women exhibited limited engagement in the initiation and passing of legislation and resolutions. The limited involvement of women was indicated that female senators were less engaged in formal legislative processes compared to their male counterparts as they encountered institutional obstacles within the legislative framework that restricted their capacity to propose measures and the dynamics within political parties also influenced the situation. However, in presenting motions, raising CANs, and posing relevant questions, women effectively worked as they effectively employed these instruments to highlight matters of national significance, especially with human rights, social justice, and gender equality. In motions, female senators significantly influenced the policy agenda to guarantee a variety of subjects that were comprehensively addressed in parliamentary discussions. The research demonstrated that females were exceptionally proficient at employing CANs to tackle urgent matters and their questions indicated that female senators were notably proactive in posing enquiries,

showcasing their dedication to monitoring and responsibility. The findings determined the significance of acknowledging the contributions of women and the necessity of ongoing efforts to improve their involvement in official lawmaking activities.

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