

## WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS OF THE SENATE OF PAKISTAN (2015-2018): A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

**Purpose of the study:** The article analyzes the participation of women in the legislative business of the Senate of Pakistan during 2015-18. It explores the political behavior of Pakistan in the context of women and the role of women in politics. This article witnesses an analysis of the Senate's work during 2015-2018 in the context of women.

**Methodology:** The assessment of bills, resolutions, privilege motions, questions, call of attention notices, and adjournment motions are analyzed for a deep understanding of the role of women in the Senate. To draw a rational conclusion, the analytical, qualitative and quantitative method is used for the analysis of this study.

**Main Findings:** This study draws a conclusion that the Senate of Pakistan had not as many women Senators as it needs; however, the women's participation during this span identified that the number of members does not matter if the present women participate well in the institution. It was also drawn in this study that charismatic leadership also provides ways to all participants without any discrimination.

**Applications of the study:** The law-making institutions needs the participation of both male and female by their population ratio in the country while the Senate of Pakistan did not have such several women legislators. It is recommended to increase the number of women in the legislature. This study will be useful for legislative bodies, students of politics, and Parliamentary studies.

**Novelty/Originality of the study:** The study has an edge over other studies in the sense that the legislative business of the Senate of Pakistan had not been addressed in this way. The period of the study had uniqueness because it witnessed a large number of women legislators. This study will make able to understand the importance of women legislators in the legislative bodies.

**Keywords:** Senate, Women's Participation, Legislation, Bills, Leadership.

### INTRODUCTION

Democracy believes in the equivalency of the whole nation without any gender discrimination. The role of women in a democratic society cannot be negated in terms of social, economic, political, legal, and other perspectives. The 19<sup>th</sup> Constitution amendment of the US vested the power to a woman to vote ([NCC, n.d](#)) which was an indirect step for women to take part in the legislature. Pakistan since its inception adopted the British legacy that provided a Parliamentary system. Women remained in the Parliament of Pakistan with a minor number. However, in current years the situation has started improving and women actively participated in the legislative process.

The Constitution of 1973 introduced a bicameral legislature having Senate as the Upper House and National Assembly as the Lower House. The Upper House provided equal representation to all provinces as compared to the Lower House which was based on population size. The Upper House is constituted under the norm of continuity therefore may call a 'Chamber of continuity' ([Rajya Sabha, 1997](#)) so it cannot be dissolved. The term of Senators was devised as six years which was more than National Assembly's members. It showed the supremacy of the Upper House over the Lower House. The Senate of Pakistan proved its necessity during the whole period and the participation of women is undeniable as they worked actively. This study examined the role of women in the legislative process of the Senate of Pakistan during the period of Chairman Mian Raza Rabbani from 2015 to 2018.

### METHODOLOGY

The study is about the participation of women in the legislative process in the Senate of Pakistan. The historical aspects are determined in the study so a qualitative approach is used. The legislation in the Senate of Pakistan is based on assessment of bills, resolutions, privilege motions, questions, call of attention notices, and adjournment motions so analytical method is used for this purpose. The topic is related to the Senate so website of the Senate was used as the complete list of the legislators can be accessed from there. The quantitative approach is also used in the study to analyze the number of the legislative works done by the female members of the Senate of Pakistan.

## Discussion/Analysis

### First Senate of Pakistan

Women faced several issues in the male-dominated society of Pakistan and even the Parliament of Pakistan was seen through with the lowest women participation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The best method to assure women's participation in the legislature was the fixation on gender quotas. The first constituent assembly of Pakistan granted equal political rights to women but that assembly contained only two women legislators. The Constitution of 1956 and 1962 was unicameral and these two constitutions also dealt with the reserved seats in National Assembly. The Constitution of 1973 also provided reserved seats to women in National and provincial assemblies but negated Senate in this regard. In the first Senate of Pakistan, 45 seats were determined for Senators and there was no fixed quota for women. The number of seats is specified in the following table:

**Table 1:** No. of Total Seats of the Senate of Pakistan in 1973

Federating Unit	No of Seats
Punjab	10
Sindh	10
NWFP	10
Baluchistan	10
FATA	3
Federal Capital	2

**Source:** First Senate of Pakistan

The first elections of the Senate were held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July in Punjab, the 6<sup>th</sup> of July in Sindh, the 8<sup>th</sup> of July in Baluchistan, the 9<sup>th</sup> of July in FATA, and the 10<sup>th</sup> of July in NWFP ([Pakistan, 1980](#)). The results came in favor of the Pakistan Peoples Party as the party earned more seats in the first Senate of Pakistan. With several winnings, Pakistan Peoples Party also became able to elect a woman Senator. Miss Saima Usman was the first ever elected Senator from Punjab ([Pakistan, Members' List, 1973-1975](#)) that was elected for the two years term.<sup>1</sup> The term of two years expired in July 1975 so 23 members were retired from the seat including Miss Saima Usman. New elections were held in July 1975 and the position of the Pakistan Peoples Party became strong with an increase of two seats to 31. Once again only PPP became able to elect a woman in the Senate. Miss Asifa Farooqi was elected to the general seat of Punjab province ([Pakistan, Members' List, 1975-1977](#)).

The year 1977 witnessed a change in the number of seats in the Senate. The seats were increased to 63 from 45 ([Pakistan, 1980](#)). The outbreak of 63 seats was:

**Table 2:** Increased Number of Seats in Senate of Pakistan, 1977

Federating Unit	No of Seats
Punjab	14
Sindh	14
NWFP	14
Baluchistan	14
FATA	5
Federal Capital	2

**Source:** First Senate of Pakistan

The winning of the PPP in general elections in 1977, increased their number of Senators too. This time PPP become able to elect three women legislators while other parties did not include any women. Miss Asifa Farooqi, Begum Aziza Hamayun Mirza, and Mrs. Bibi Perveen came into Senate ([Pakistan, Members' List, 1977](#)).

The outcome of the election of 1977 was not welcomed by the opposition so a high level of protest was started throughout the country. As the situation worsened, the Military intervened in politics and Army Chief General Zia-ul-Haq imposed martial law on July 5, 1977, and dismissed the Parliamentarians. However, during the first four years of the Senate, the participation of women in the Senate was not welcomed. The Senate even did not allow them to take the floor. These four years witnessed no legislative participation of women just because of the patriarchal setup of the Parliament.

### Restoration of the Senate in 1985

General Zil-ul-Haq had given a new boost to Islamization in the country. Under this setup, he introduced a new kind of Parliament as Majlis-e-Shoora that was incorporated in 1980 ([Shah, Waris, & Basit, 2016](#)). The government worked under this setup for five years and lastly, in 1985, Zia-ul-Haq lifted Martial Law and restored democracy. With the

<sup>1</sup> The term of the Senators was two years, which was increased to three years in 1985.

restoration of democracy, Senate and National Assembly started it's working again. Non-Party based elections were held in 1985 and the change was witnessed in the number of seats in the Senate from 63 to 87 (Pakistan, History, 2023). The tenure of Senators was extended to six years and half of them retire after every three years. The division of seats was:

**Table 3:** Increased Number of Seats in 1985

Federating Unit	No of Seats
Punjab	19
Sindh	19
NWFP	19
Baluchistan	19
FATA	8
Federal Capital	3

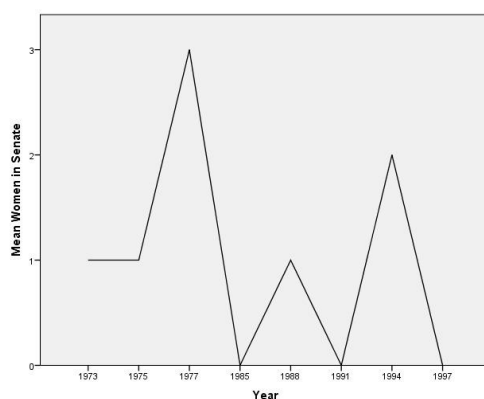
**Source:** Website Senate of Pakistan ([www.Senate.gov.pk](http://www.Senate.gov.pk))

The breakdown of seats existed until 1999 and Senators were elected through the devised system. The quota was not provided to women and even 1985's Senate elections resulted in no winning of women. This was the outcome of Zia's Islamization process that curtailed the political participation of women. This was the setback for women that not a single representative of women was present in the Upper House of the Parliament.

In March 1988, the Senate of Pakistan elected half of the new Senators, and this time unevenly a woman Senator was elected from Balochistan. Only one female Dr. Noor Jehan Panazai was elected to the general seat while the other 86 Senators were male (Zia & Bari, 1999). During the same year, the plane of President Zia-ul-Haq crashed in Bahawalpur, and general elections were announced. The elections resulted in the winning of the Pakistan Peoples Party and Benazir Bhutto became Prime Minister. Her government was sacked by President Ishaq Khan in 1990 (Crossette, 1990) and IJI became able to form a government under the Premiership of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. During these three years, women's participation in Senate was at its lowest rate.

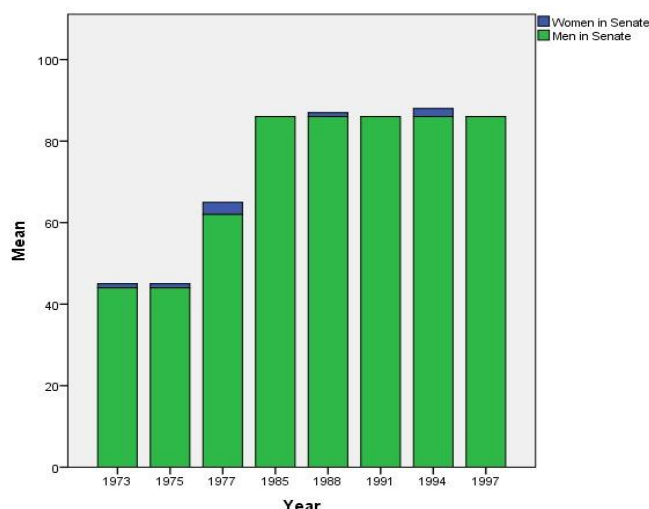
March 1991 witnessed another election in the Senate of Pakistan this time no woman was elected on half of the seats; however, Dr. Noor Jahan Panazai who had occupied a seat in 1988 was still present in the House. These elections were held on a party basis and IJI was in Federal Government so they nominated their candidate for both Chairman and Deputy Chairman. Surprisingly, the one and only lady in the House, Dr. Noor Jahan Panazai elected as the first ever Deputy Chairperson of the Senate of Pakistan (Carpineta, 2007). Instead of being at a stronger seat, the participation of women was not so energetic during the period.

Ms. Fiza Junejo of Pakistan Muslim League (J) and Mrs. Nasreen Jalil of Mutahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) were elected as Senators in 1994 (Pakistan, Members' List, 1994-1997). Both members were from Sindh and remained for six years in the House until the abolition of the Senate in 1999. In 1996, one more woman, Begum Nadira Khan Khakwani elected from Punjab in a by-election for a period less than five months. (22<sup>nd</sup> September 1996 to 20<sup>th</sup> March 1997) (Tabassum, Afzal, Taherani, & Tabassum, 2014). In the elections of 1997, no new woman participant was elected as Senator. Before the completion of the term, the proclamation of emergency of Pervez Musharraf once again discontinued the Senate in October 1999.



**Graph 1:** Women's Occupied Seats in Senate of Pakistan (1973-1997)

The graph shows the overall participation of women in the Senate of Pakistan from 1973 to 1999. This graph unveiled that the presence of women in the Senate was the lowest and during these 27 years, the highest number of women in the Senate was three and zero at the lowest end. Even the male-dominated the Senate discouraged the participation of women.



**Graph 2:** Comparison of Male and Female Senators (1973-1997)

The number of participants that are highlighted in green represents the male Senators while blue represents the female. This shows that women were not even 1% of the total House throughout this period. The women had occupied powerful seats such as Prime Minister and Deputy Chairperson but remained unable to do valuable legislation for women just because of low numbers and inactive participation.

### Senate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

With the promulgation of the Emergency 1999, Pervez Musharraf sacked the government of Nawaz Sharif but allowed President Rafiq Tarar to resume his office. The Parliament was dissolved and once again in contradiction to 1973's Constitution and the principle of the 'Chamber of Continuity', Senate was not only dissolved but abolished till 2003. After two years of emergency, in 2001, Tarar resigned from the office of President and Pervez Musharraf assumed the office (Rieck, 2015). In 2002, Musharraf called for a referendum to assure his five years term for the office of President and he got 97.97% votes in his favor (Mueller, 2002). However, in May 2003, Tarar claimed that "Under Article 44 of the Constitution, I am the President of the country, while Gen Pervez Musharraf has imposed himself through a fake referendum on the Presidency (Dawn, 2003)."

After the referendum, National Assembly was restored in 2002 while Senate was restored after a year in 2003. Pervez Musharraf got credit for the introduction of a quota for women in the Senate of Pakistan. The introduced quota was 17% and the number of seats was also increased to 100. In this regard 50 Senators were elected for three years interval 2003-2006 including 9 women (Pakistan, Members' List, 2003-2006) while other 51 Senators that were posed to retire after six years were elected for 2003-2009 also included 9 women (Pakistan, Members' List, 2003-2009). The number of female Senators during 2003-2009 was 18 which indicated 17 women on reserved seats and 1 woman on general seats. This was the highest number of women the Senate ever witnessed throughout its previous history. With the introduction of quotas, women became stronger than the previous times.

The same criteria were adopted in Senate elections in 2006 and this time eight women were elected to reserved seats (Pakistan, Members' List, 2009-2012). The Senate interval of 2006-2012, 2009-2015, and 2012-2018 had 17 women on reserved seats only that were less than the previous one (ECP, 2013). In 2010, PPP's government passed the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment that increased the number of seats in the Senate by including four reserved seats for minorities. The Senate elected half of the Senators and four minority members first time in 2012 with a total number of 104 (Pakvoter, n.d).

### Senate Elections 2015

Senate elected half of its members in March 2015 including 9 women in reserve seats and two women in general seats while Ms. Sherry Rehman was also present in the House in the vice of Mr. Abdul Latif Ansari (Pakistan, Members' List, 2006-2012). During this span, eight women were already working in Senate that was elected for the interval 2012-2018. The total number of women in the Senate was 19 that were more than in 2003's Senate. The party's position after the elections was:

**Table 4:** Party's Position in 2015's Senate

Party	Overall Seats	Women Seats
PPP	27	5
PML (N)	26	5
MQM	8	3

<b>PTI</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ANP</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>JUI (F)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>PML</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>JI</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>NP</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>PkMAP</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>BNP-A</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PML (F)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>BNP-M</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Independents</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Nil</b>

**Source:** Senate of Pakistan

On March 12, 2015, after taking the oath, members elected a new Chairman and Deputy Chairman. Raja Zafar-ul-Haq, Chaudhary Aitzaz Ahsan, Syed Tahir Hussain Mushadi, Siraj-ul-Haq, Mushahid Hussain Syed, Saeed-ul-Hassan Mandokhel, Israr Ullah Khan Zahri, Hidayat Ullah, Muzaffar Hussain Shah, Molana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, Shahi Syed and Ilyas Ahmad Bilor collectively nominated Mian Raza Rabbani as a candidate of Chairman Senate. Only one nomination was received so Presiding Officer Ishaq Dar declared Mian Raza Rabbani as Chairman Senate ([Pakistan, Senate Debate, 2015](#)) under rule 9(5) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Senate, 2012.

#### **Women's Participation in Legislative Process during 2015-2018**

Women share half of the population in Pakistan but not a single time females were allowed to come into parliament on a parity basis. Before the election of 2002, women were given a 22% quota in the Parliament with 60 seats in the National Assembly and 17 in the Senate. Though this was not proportionate to their population but was a step forward under Article 34 of the Constitution.

During 2015-16, there were 70 women in National Assembly including 60 reserved, nine general, and one minority seat while in Senate 19 women Senators including 17 in reserved and two in general seats. This was 20.46% and 18.26% vice versa and overall women were 18.38% in Parliament. The participation of women from June 1, 2015, to February 26, 2016, in the National Assembly and Senate between March 12, 2015, and March 11, 2016, was admirable. Orders of the Day revealed that women contributed more than 44% of the agenda of both Houses. This ratio was three times their representation. This included questions, motions, calling attention notices, resolutions, legislative bills, amendments to rules, and matters under rule 87 ([FAFEN, 2016](#)). The participation of women during 2015-2016 was as follows:

**Table 5:** Legislation During 2015-2016

<b>Legislative Work</b>	<b>Total No.</b>	<b>Women Participation</b>
Starred Questions	1313	232
Un-starred Questions	46	25
Motions (Individual)	93	10
Motions (Collective)		4
Calling Attention Notices (Individual)	109	24
Calling Attention Notices (Collective)		5
Private Member Resolutions (Individual)	124	21
Private Member Resolutions (Collective)		8
Amendments in Rules of Procedure	16	2
Private Member Bills	3	12

**Source:** Senate Debates 2015-16

The proceedings of the Senate of Pakistan revealed that in Senate, women contributed 18% of the total agenda within a year. About 17.67% of starred questions and 54.34% of un-starred questions were asked by women which were more than the male ratio. The percentage of presenting motions was 15.05% that were presented individually and with the collaboration of male members. Similarly, the proportion of calling attention notices was 26.61% of the total that appeared on the agenda of the Senate. The introduced resolutions of private members shared 23.89%, amendments in Rules of Procedure were 12.5% and private member bills were 25% of the total. This was the finest performance of women in the Upper House. The statistics revealed that the overall performance of the Senate during the year was



admirable. 10 female Senators out of 19 attended more than 70% of sessions of the House. Senate increased the working capacity of women was an aspect of the positive role of the Chair.

The motion under Rule 218 of the Senate denotes that “any Minister or a member may give notice of a motion under Rule 218 that any policy, situation, statement or any other matter may be taken into consideration (Pakistan, 2018).” During 2015-16, eleven women Senators raised 14 motions. PPP's Senators raised five motions while MQM raised two and PML-N, BNPA, PML, and PTI familiarized one motion each. The motions contained issues related to the health sector, foreign affairs, law and order, energy, and governance.

In the case of resolutions, 29 resolutions were presented by women Senators including eight joint resolutions. The House adopted 21 resolutions which were a huge number of acceptance of resolutions. The number of women in the Senate was nineteen and each woman Senator sponsored at least one resolution. Sitara Ayaz of ANP presented seven resolutions and three of them were adopted. PPP's Sassui Palijo presented six and PTI's Samina Abid presented five resolutions while the remaining resolutions were presented by two women Senators of PML-N and one each of MQM and PTI (FAFEN, 2016).

During the period three private members bills were introduced by the women Senators that were referred to relevant standing committees. This included the Working Women (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2015 which was introduced by Samina Abid, and the Fair Representation of Women Bill, 2015 presented by Rahila Magsi. One bill was dropped due to the absence of a female Senator. Instead of this, two pre-introduced private members bills were also moved named employment rights of domestic workers was introduced in 2013 and the other was the Islamabad Compulsory Vaccination and Protection of Health Workers Bill, 2015 that was introduced by Ayesha Raza Farooq. Eight bills were passed for speedy justice in January 2016 while the Pakistan Health Research Council Bill, 2015, a Government bill introduced by Saira Afzal Tarar was also passed during the period (Pakistan, Senate Debates 2015-2016).

**Table 6:** Comparison between South Asian's Parliament

Countries	Lower or Single House			Upper House or Senate		
	Total Members	Women Members	%	Total Members	Women Members	%
Nepal	595	176	29.60%	---	---	---
Afghanistan	249	69	27.70%	68	21	30.90%
Pakistan	342	70	20.50%	104	19	18.30%
Bangladesh	350	71	20.30%			
India	542	64	11.80%	245	27	11.00%
Bhutan	47	4	8.50%	25	2	8.00%
Maldives	85	5	5.90%	---	---	---
Sri Lanka	225	13	5.80%	---	---	---

**Source:** IPU Website

Democracy will be at its best form if both genders get equal opportunities in the political setup. The country where women were undermined and underestimated, contributed very well to parliamentary affairs during 2016-2017. In countries of South Asia, Pakistan was ranked at third number by women participation in the Lower House while at second number in the Upper House. Even the biggest claiming democratic state, India did not have much effective participation of women in Parliament.

The women members mainly focused on the issues of health, harassment, honor killings, and rape victims. The ratio of woman participation in legislation was more than male members was 62% in the National Assembly and nearly 13% in the Senate so an average of 38% of legislation was done by women in Parliament (FAFEN, 2017). This identified that women actively participated in parliamentary business.

On the Orders of the day of Senate, 2009 agenda items were included in 87 sittings of Senate from April 2016 to February 2017. Approximately 265 agenda items were proposed by 19 women Senators with an average of 14. The average attendance of women was 60% which was less than male members as they attended 65% of sittings. The highest attendance of female Senators was 93% and the lowest at 21% (FAFEN, 2017). The participation of women in legislative work is shown in the following table:

**Table 7: Legislation During 2016-2017**

Legislative Work	Total No.	Women Participation
Questions	1456	233
Motions under Rule 218	135	14
Adjournment Motions	106	17
Calling Attention Notices	111	19
Resolutions	90	13
Bills	106	10

**Source:** Senate Debates 2016-17

The women legislators introduced 10 bills including six individual and four collective bills out of 106 which were 9.43% of the total bills. Similarly, 13 resolutions out of 90 that included eight individuals and five with male members were 14.44% of the total. The question percentage was 16% while Motions under Rule 218 proportioned 19%. In the same way, 16% of Adjournment Motions were sponsored by female Senators, and 17% of Calling Attention Notices were added by them.

The House of Federation witnessed 33 Private Members' bills with the acceptance of 32 bills. The Senate approved eight Private Members bills including three bills of women lawmakers related to education, elections, and energy reforms. The status of presented bills by women was:

**Table 8: Status of Bills Presented by Women**

Bill Title	Presented by	Sponsorship	Status
The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority Bill, 2015	Sassui Palijo	Individually	Passed
The Representation of the People Bill, 2016	Sherry Rehman	Individually	Passed
The Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Bill, 2016	Nuzhat Sadiq	Individually	Passed
The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2016 (Substitution of Article 251)	Sassui Palijo, Sehar Kamran, Samina Abid, Rubina Khalid, and Kalsoom Parveen	Joint	Introduced
The Panama Papers Inquiries Bill, 2016	Sassui Palijo, Sehar Kamran, Sherry Rehman, Samina Abid, Robina Irfan, Rubina Khalid, Sitara Ayaz, Zahida Khan, and Khalida Parveen		Introduced
The Right to Information Bill, 2016	Robina Irfan	Jointly	Introduced
The Islamabad National Hospital Bill, 2017	Sehar Kamran	Individually	Deferred

**Source:** [Senate Debates 2016-2017](#)

The bills introduced in the Parliament allow to create or modify a law while the resolution is an opinion of a legislator or a political party that recommends or conveys a message specifically on an important matter. During 2016-17, thirteen resolutions were presented in the House, including eight individual and five joint resolutions. The Senate assented to ten of them that were related to economy, tributes, condemnations, security, and law and order situations. In this regard PPP's Mudassir Sehar presented five resolutions, Sitara Ayaz of ANP introduced four while others were brought by Kalsoom Perveen, Samina Abid, Rubina Khalid, and Gul Bashra ([Pakistan, Senate Debates 2016-2017](#)).

MPs use Calling Attention Notice as a tool to draw the attention of the government towards public issues. The Senate of Pakistan witnessed 107 notices during this period including 63 were initiated by women legislators. Among these 107 notices, 84 were further considered, including five individual women sponsored, one jointly sponsored by two females, and with their counterparts. Two individuals and one jointly presented notice were dropped by Senate. In the case of questions, 10 women Senators asked 233 questions with the highest number of 66 questions asked by PML-N's Nuzhat Sadiq, 39 by Rahila Magsi, 34 by Kalsoom Perveen, 31 by Najma Hameed and 15 by Sherry Rehman of PPP ([Pakistan, Senate Debates 2016-2017](#)).

The participation of women in the presentation of motion under Rule 218 was also commendable. During this span, eight individual motions were familiarized to the House including four by Mudassir Sehar Kamran, three by Kalsoom Perveen, and one by Rahila Magsi. Similarly, six joint motions were moved by females and males. These motions were in favor of overseas Pakistanis, IT, political workers, governance, foreign affairs, and the law and order situation. Overall seven motions were presented by Mudassir Sehar Kamran, four by Sassui Palijo, and three each by Samina

Abid, Rubina Khalid, and Sherry Rehman. In the case of adjournment motions four individual and 13 joint motions were introduced by females in total of 104 ([Pakistan, Senate Debates 2016-2017](#)).

In the next Senate's Parliamentary year 2017-2018, women MPs underwent 39% of parliamentary business. Comparatively, females participated more effectively through regular attendance and substantive contribution ([FAFEN, 2018](#)). Orders of the Day unfolded that 5,654 agenda items were reported and the ratio of women's contribution in National Assembly was 49% and 15% in the Senate. The contribution of women Senators in legislative business is as follows:

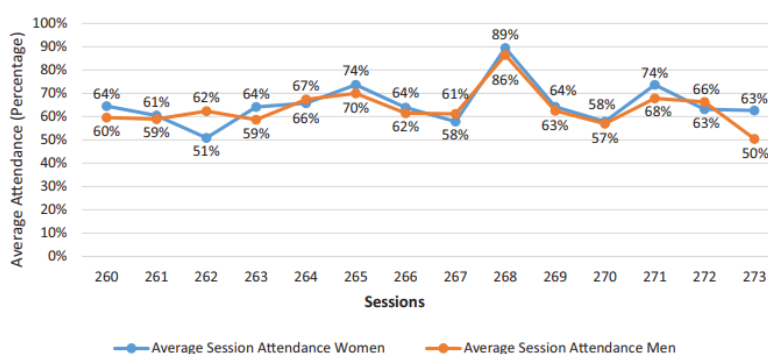
**Table 9:** Legislation During 2017-2018

Legislative Work	Total No.	Women Participation
Questions	1506	241
Motions under Rule 218	114	48
Calling Attention Notices	104	26
Amendments in Rules	14	2
Resolutions	99	15
Bills	145	18

**Source:** Senate Debates 2016-17

The female Senators initiated 18 bills which were 12.41% of total bills while the ratio of resolutions was approximately 15%. In the case of Questions women contributed 16% and in Calling Attention Notices the percentage was 25%. Forty-eight motions were 42% of the total motions presented under Rule 218 of the Senate of Pakistan. An average of 17 agenda items were presented by women Senators as compared to 21 agenda items per male. From March 2017 to March 2018, 100 sittings of the Senate were held which were attended by woman legislators with an average of 64% as compared to the male average of 59% ([Pakistan, Senate Debates 2017-2018](#)).

**Average Session Attendance in Senate**



**Graph 3:** Average session attendance in Senate

**Source:** FAFEN Report

The Parliament witnessed over 243 Government and Private Bills of which 44 were introduced by females which was 26% of the total bills while 27 bills were jointly led with the help of male members. In Senate 13 bills were individually sponsored by women and five collaborated bills. Among these 18 bills, 3 were passed by the Senate. The bills presented on the floor of the House were:

**Table 10:** Status of Bills Presented by Women

Bill Title	Presented by	Sponsorship	Status
The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2017 (Amendment of Article 228)	Sehar Kamran	Individually	Introduced
The Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Bill, 2017			
The National Civic Education Commission Bill, 2017			
The Islamabad Restriction on Employment of Children Bill, 2017			Referred to Committee
The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2017 (Amendment of Article 228)			
The Islamabad National Hospital Bill, 2017			Withdrawn
The Islamabad Wildlife (Protection,			Dropped



Preservation, Conservation and Management) (Amendment) Bill, 2018			
The Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2017 (Amendment of section 364A of PPC and Schedule II of Cr.P.C)		Jointly	Introduced
The Criminal Laws (Amendment) (Protection of Rights of Transgender Persons) Bill, 2017	Rubina Khalid	Individually	Introduced
The Pakistan Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 2017			Dropped
The Pakistan Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 2017 (Amendments of sections 375 and 377)			
The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2017		Jointly	Introduced
The Elections (Amendment) Bill, 2017	Samina Saeed	Jointly	Passed
The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2017	Samina Saeed, Kalsoom Parveen and Robina Irfan		Introduced
The National Commission on the Status of Women (Amendment) Bill, 2017	Nasreen Jalil	Individually	Passed
he Right of Access to Information Bill, 2017	Maryam Aurangzeb	Individually	Passed
The Members of Parliament (Salaries and Allowances) (Amendment) Bill, 2018	Sitara Ayaz	Individually	Introduced
The Constitution (Amendment), Bill, 2017 (Insertion of new Article 25B)	Khalida Parveen, Sherry Rehman	Jointly	Dropped
The Companies Profits (Workers' Participation) (Amendment) Bill, 2018	Sassui Palijo	Jointly	Dropped

Source: [Senate Debates 2017-2018](#)

During 2017-18, thirteen resolutions were moved individually by female Senators while two were jointly introduced. Muddasir Sehar Kamran, Sherry Rehman, Rubina Khalid, Sassui Palijo, Kalsoom Perveen Khalida Parveen, and Sitara Ayaz proposed these resolutions ([Pakistan, Senate Debates 2017-2018](#)). The rules were also amended in Senate and 14 amendments were proposed carrying two amendments of female Senators. The proposed amendments were in Rule 64 (2) and Rule 93 (Pakistan, 2018).

In Calling Attention Notice 19 individual and seven joint notices were added by women while in the case of questions, 241 were asked by women in 1506 of total. Under Rule 218 of the Senate 17 individual motions and 31 collaborated motions were presented by women. Similarly, 45 adjournment motions were initiated by women senators including 24 individual and 21 joint motions ([Pakistan, Senate Debates 2017-2018](#)). These facts unfolded that women's participation during 2015-2018 was highly active.

## CONCLUSION

The Senate of Pakistan underwent several changes while during all periods the participation of women was a question mark until the introduction of a quota for women. Though quota empowered women in Senate but thier participation was not as good as it was expected. During 21<sup>st</sup> century, the participation of women was admirable but still affected due to male-dominated society. The other reason was the dictatorial behavior of the Musharraf government. The Senate during 2003-2015 witnessed women participation; however, it went to its peak during the period of Chairman Senate, Mian Raza Rabbani (2015-2018). The participation of women was far better than the previous time and even the upcoming year. With the post-election change in its leadership and membership, the Senate struggled during the 16th parliamentary year to maintain the higher standards of productivity and efficiency set during the previous term (2015-18) but the House did not become able to do so. Women's participation was lessened by 6% from 39% to 33% in the Parliament. The Senate also registered some decline in the counts of efficiency and institutionalization during the year. The study concluded that the quota allocation and charisma of Mian Raza Rabbani's leadership brought a significant increase in the efficiency of women's participation in the Senate.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research is limited to analyzing the legislation of Senators during 2015-18. The Senate was constituted in 1973 so several tenures are there which are unaddressed. Similarly, the legislation by women demands to highlight the role of women in legislative process that still needs more research.

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## AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Hamid Iqbal: Wrote the paper and devised the main idea and research design.

Muhammad Waris: Analyzed the data.

Asia Saif Alvi: contributing to data collection.

Asifa Tariq: Edited the manuscript.

Humaira Jabeen: Proofreading.

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