

*Human Rights Violations and Government Accountability: A Constitutional Perspective  
and International Responsibility*

## Human Rights Violations and Government Accountability: A Constitutional Perspective and International Responsibility

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Received on: 22-07-2024

Accepted on: 20-08-2024

### **Abstract**

This study is conducted to evaluate the human rights condition in developing and developed nations with a particular situation in Pakistan. It highlighted the reasons behind the human rights violations in the country. The people's enforced disappearance without due course of law is a violation of human rights and a fair trial, which is common. The Pakistani constitution protects the basic fundamental human rights, which are inalienable starting from birth and continuing till the death of the human. The political victimization is curtailed by the professionals of strong institutions. Institutions are under the command of the chief executive of the provinces and country, due to which government officials have to obey the commands of the political elites even if that is against the interest of the country to save their jobs. The posting and transfer are also linked with the faithfulness of the command of the political elite. The true provision of fundamental rights can be ensured by establishing an independent judiciary in reality. The people's awareness is essential to protecting their basic rights. Political rigging in elections at the behest of law enforcement agencies can only be curtailed by the public power for actual democracy. Practicing Islamic teaching is of utmost importance to protect human rights because the religion focuses on public welfare. Integrating social responsibility and human rights can lead to a more balanced society and maintain results for marginalized areas. Data for the research is collected and analyzed by utilizing the qualitative research methodology techniques that are most appropriate for social science research.

**Key words:** Human rights in developing and developed nations, Reasons for Human Rights Violations, Political Victimization, and Human Rights, Human Rights are Inalienable, Human Rights in Islam

*Human Rights Violations and Government Accountability: A Constitutional Perspective and International Responsibility*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Human rights constitute building blocks upon which the moral and legal basis of any just society rests. They provide a benchmark against which the state of a country's adherence to principles of justice, equality, and individual liberty may be measured. The quest to understand and respect human rights has been a concerted effort at the international level, transcending national and cultural differences. Different nations have put these principles into their legal systems. In the present study it is attempted to look at the present state of human rights through a multi-faceted lens. The research studies in depth the subtle interplay between the national and international dimensions and specifically considers Pakistan's Constitution of 1973 as the case study. Not an abstract academic exercise, however, but a relevant inquiry into the tangible realization of human rights in a particular geopolitical context (Rosga, 2009).

The Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, is one of such crucial documents which have undergone amendments in the backdrop of constantly changing dynamics of this vast and diversified nation. It is quite important for the shaping of the legal as well as the political foreground of Pakistan, and its provisions are at a behest to determine the level of human rights as safeguarded within the country. International to its tally, Pakistan, like any country from the world, is bound by international agreements and treaties whereby this country commits to respecting and protecting its human rights. While these include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, this commitment is to their purposes on their embracing of all human dignity and welfare. What this paper aims to do is to test how well Pakistan meets those commitments at the international levels and how effectively it translates them into domestic law and practice (Hughes, 2011).

A signatory to numerous international treaties and conventions on human rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Pakistan has committed to the cause of protecting fundamental rights for its people but has only marginally translated this commitment into practice. Several structural issues are in the forefront of challenges that have stood in the way of human rights protection and promotion including political instability, military rule over governance, socio-economic inequalities, religious extremism, and systemic corruption (Akhtar, 2022).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literature review about study is summarized as under;

In 2011, 189 countries endorsed Convention No. 189 as a measure to protect the often-overlooked domestic workforce by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The idea of the convention was to unhidden these workers and to set minimum standards and principles concerning their rights. All states which ratified the convention modified their laws to larger or lesser extent to comply with the requirements of the convention. Pakistan, even though did not ratify the convention, adopted several amendments in the Children employment of Punjab act 2011 with regards to the convention. Nonetheless, problems arise for domestic workers in boosting wages and prices due to population growth (Nawaz).

*Human Rights Violations and Government Accountability: A Constitutional Perspective and International Responsibility*

Human rights are the rights that begin with the moment of the birth of the human being and last until its death. The idea of Woman Rights has reached a wider audience owing to the oppression of the women in history and the inferiority hypotheses towards females. This article analyses women rights in human rights approach with reference the countries of South Asia, India and Pakistan. It tries to elaborate the concept of human and women rights and their recent development on the international scene as well as the comparison of women rights in India and Pakistan although both countries are democracy (Gupta).

This study examined that how the existing laws, policies, and mechanisms of Pakistan and Nepal can be employed to bring an end to enforced disappearance. It has considered literature sources, institutional reports, national policy, legal documents, and documents that are available internationally. This study also makes some policy and law construction recommendations for local implementation, considering prevention laws in place. Some of them worked well while others resulted in some undesirable consequences, such as inner federal legislation, amenity statutes, and military disobedience (AHMED, (2020)).

In this study it is investigated the feminist struggle of human rights universalization (UHR) for women in Pakistan using UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations against Women (CEDAW) as a case study. This case study attempted to provide insights into implementing UHR within the confines of one context, The Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The study will critically examine the approaches that are pursued by Pakistan in incorporation of Islamic dimensions to its constitution without denying CEDAW and claim for a secular Constitution which promulgates gender liberty using principles as primary guide. For Pakistan, the level of interest in women's rights and its intention to implement CEDAW has been inconsistent. The study concludes by providing suggestions to better implement CEDAW in Pakistan & the Islamic Republic (Tazeem, 2015).

The United Nations was created to maintain peace and security on a global scale. It ratified many agreements, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which comprised thirty primary articles. The United Nations also adopted a resolution against torture to take all possible measures to combat and prevent the atrocities of torture and inhuman treatment. All states but the US have signed up to and incorporated this resolution into their domestic laws. This study explained the different provisions of CAT and its interpretation by international bodies and law in adoption with one Islamic Republic like Pakistan which is ratifying this Convention (Islam S. &, 2022).

Human civilization has developed survival systems, laws and regulations to protect the rights of the state as well as citizens. Human rights are universal, which apply to all race, gender, and social status. Pakistan is facing some hardships to maintain these rights for its citizens. Ultimately, they are affecting the citizens of Pakistan adversely. A comprehensive framework is required to maintain harmony in society. Laws are implemented for each and everything that would save welfare and ethical standards. Human rights, in Pakistan, hold an added importance because it happens to be an Islamic state. This paper discusses failed prosecution factors related to human rights violations in Pakistan (Korai).

The study explored the advantages and disadvantages of involving human rights principles in community development projects in Pakistan. It describes the potential benefits, which include the empowerment of the deprived, social justice, and sustainable development (Uddin, 2024).

*Human Rights Violations and Government Accountability: A Constitutional Perspective and International Responsibility*

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

**THE STATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS: AREAS OF STRENGTH AND AREAS REQUIRING IMPROVEMENT**

Obviously, Pakistan has long been influenced by the complicated thread of human rights, productively at the hands of, amongst other factors, political instability in the country, religious and ethnic differences, negative economic challenges, and strongly imbedded cultural traditions. Just like other countries, Pakistan is also a signatory to international human rights treaties like Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. While these treaties are signed into being, it is through implementation into standards by Pakistan that shows regions of strength and huge areas of required improvement (Gerber, (2011)).

***Legal Framework and Commitments to International Human Rights***

Pakistan has the rule of law, although there is a defined framework of human rights in the country, which begins with the Constitution. Fundamental rights in Pakistan include the right to life and liberty, a right to a fair trial, freedom of speech and of assembly, and protection against torture and degrading treatment. Pakistan has ratified several international conventions on human rights, including but not limited to the ICESCR and the CRC. Major fundamental rights are ensured through Chapter II of the Constitution of Pakistan. Some among these are the freedom of speech and assembly and equality before the law. Major international human rights treaties ratified by Pakistan clearly show that the country sincerely attempted making national law transform in an acceptable harmony with the international human rights standards. The judiciary in Pakistan, at times, has been a forceful arbiter of the protection of human rights. The Supreme Court and High Courts have been in varied points wherein they showed checks against the excessive power of the executive while at the same time gross violation of human rights also took place. This makes a huge gap between the commitments provided by Pakistan to the international community and the implementation thereof. On paper, the Constitution assured all rights; however, when it comes to its implementation, enforceability becomes quite weak, and those adversely affected by this turn of events are women, religious minorities, and ethnic minorities. Some of the ways through which the rule of law is undermined are as follows: Corruption, incompetence, and political influence that most often affects the judiciary and law enforcement agents, meaning most citizens are kept away from justice. Many citizens, especially those in the rural areas, lack information and knowledge about the law relating to their rights and entitlements. They do not know how to appeal for their right infringement (Hong, (2018)).

***Freedom of Speech and Media***

Fundamental rights, freedom of expression, including the freedom of the press, resemble a mere paper statement. The Pakistani Constitution, article 19, guarantees the same but, in real life, exercising these freedoms is not all that easy. The media landscape is robust and pluralistic: a sea of television channels besides which news appears on newspapers and online channels. Often the media plays a 'vetoing' role in forcing the government to pay heed

*Human Rights Violations and Government Accountability: A Constitutional Perspective and International Responsibility*

and deliver social issues. The civil society activism- numerous human rights activists have demanded press freedom and freedom of expression from various civil society organizations in Pakistan, knowing they will face threats and harassment at all costs (Hurley, 2004) Pakistan had been disputing this for the longest time. Issues of free speech and expression alongside the rights of minorities have all created challenges in the country's quest to protect human rights across the population. While the state carries prima facie responsibility toward maintaining these rights, NGOs, civil society, and the international community have played a critical role in articulating and promoting human rights throughout Pakistan.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Results and discussion about the topic are summarized as under;

### **ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS)**

In Pakistan, probably the most visible and active advocates and monitors of human rights are non-governmental organizations. These play an all-rounded role in advocating, litigation through provision of legal aid, giving social services, and the holding of the state actors into account. Some of the prominent Pakistani NGOs have emerged and appeared with important activities of the past two decades. These include women's rights and labor rights, child protection, and freedom of expression. Their efforts are therefore a positive move towards giving greater recognition to human rights at the national and international level (Ahmed, 2021).

#### ***a. Advocacy and Awareness Raising***

NGOs in Pakistan mainly served as venues for public awareness concerning human rights issues. It is here that the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), the Aurat Foundation, and the Shirkat Gah come into importance-in terms of focusing public attention on abuses while also calling for a policy change. They provide data, research, and reports that can make human rights abuses visible to the public eye when otherwise they would not be noticed or trashed by the state. For example, HRCP's annual reports stating the human rights situation in Pakistan becomes an important reference point for organizations at home as well as abroad thereafter. NGOs also engage in public education through workshops and seminars, media campaigns, and online activism. Such advocacy arms the public with information over their rights and shows them where redress can be sought. Such an advocacy creates a society that tolerates gender difference, caste, creed, religion, and class, as well as one that sees distributions of social goods and services on equitable terms, and justice should prevail. Pakistan's leading women's rights organization. It has sparked mass interest in subjects like domestic violence, honor killings, and equality to bring stronger legal protection for women (Mirza, 2004).

#### ***b. Legal Assistance and Services***

Many NGOs work directly in Pakistan to provide law assistance for victims of human rights violation, more so amongst those incapable of accessing justice. For example, the Pakistan Institute of Labor Education and Research (PILER) offers legal aid to several minority groups- such as laborers who face exploitation, women and gender-based violence, and minority religious persecution-while the Legal Aid Society (LAS) offers similar legal assistance. They

## *Human Rights Violations and Government Accountability: A Constitutional Perspective and International Responsibility*

help, through lawyers, assure justice for otherwise vulnerable populations. In their strategic litigation, they seek to shape the development of standards-based laws and policies. For example, some NGOs have made a remarkable contribution in facilitating changes in the law on child marriage, honor killings, and sexual harassment, among others (Purkey, 2014).

### ***c. Monitoring and Reporting Human Rights Violations***

Other significant functions performed by NGOs include monitoring and reporting on violations of human rights. This is likely to be called for whenever state actors have a stake in or are colluding with the violation of human rights in a particular country. Examples of this category include HRCP and Justice Project Pakistan (JPP), which ascertain and investigate cases of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and torture. Information regarding the abuse itself is recorded for both domestic and international consumption. These reports often form the basis for international human rights bodies and foreign governments to call Pakistan to account on its human rights record. For example, JPP has been highly vocal concerning some of the distressing issues regarding the cases of death row inmates, and many of these cases would probably go unreported except that sometimes such inmates are tortured or even processed without due process (Gaer, 1996).

### **ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY**

Civil society adds another dimension to the work of NGOs: in that besides the organizations like the media groups, professional associations, academia, grassroots movements and individual activists working towards human rights in Pakistan. Civil society plays a very important role in creating a space for dialogue, fostering accountability and pushing for systemic change. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are very instrumental in promoting democratic values, dialogue, and push for systemic change. CSOs make possible and open the time of dialogue, delimiting the functioning of governments, institutions, and the public. CSOs are watchdogs; they unveil corruption, especially their intention, and ensure that implementations are equitable. Respect for human rights and social justice issues campaign also features their focus: from gender equality, racial justice, and environmental protection to economic inequality. They support systemic change by advocating for laws, policy, and societal norms changes. CSOs also provide capacity building and empowerment resources, enabling them to build and empower the individual and community. It also provides crisis response and humanitarian aid. Coming as a force full of zeal promoting inclusion, accountability, and justice, CSOs are a crucial and vital force for sustainable change all over the world (Ghaus-Pasha, 2005).

### ***a. Grassroots Movements and Community Activism***

Grassroots movements and community-based organizations make up an essential part of the civil society effort in human rights promotion. Movements, like the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), which advocates for the rights of the Pashtun ethnic group, bring to the fore the abuses of human rights in Pakistan's tribal areas, including enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings. Such movements often suffer from state repression, but their activities have opened up new spaces to discuss ethnic discrimination, military overreach, and the need for justice and accountability. Grassroots activism is now more important than

*Human Rights Violations and Government Accountability: A Constitutional Perspective and International Responsibility*

ever in places where state institutions are weak or non-existent and where marginalized communities often experience violence and neglect (Khan A. &, 2004).

***b. Academia and Research***

Universities and think tanks produce data-based insights that inform decision-making on effective interventions and predict long-term effects of certain policies. Focus areas include issues in international human rights law, the ethics of intervention, and the structural root causes of inequality. Think tanks like Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the Brookings Institution aim towards conducting policy research analysis and advocacy. They present very influential reports that can affect public opinion and even inform the direction of governmental thinking. University-based and think tank-based research has been crucial in formulating an appropriate global response to the refugee crisis, especially concerning the root causes and consequences of forced migration. Another critical area that research can inform policy debate is where climate change and human rights converge. However, the challenge is that such research is hard to translate into actual policies which make a difference since policymakers are not interested in pure academic research for policy choices (Hamza Rahman, 2024).

**ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

International players like intergovernmental organizations, foreign governments, and international NGOs need to be observed that lobby about human rights issues in Pakistan. Such actions may also give legitimacy to human rights issues and bargaining power to force the Pakistani government to respond with respect to the international standards. It was its rich cultural diversity and complexities of the political setting that made it stand out among the other nations that received great attention from the international world regarding the human rights situation. The United Nations, the European Union, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation have seriously condemned the grave and gross violation of human rights taking place in Pakistan. The UN expressed their concern over the issue of enforced disappearances, freedom of expression, and those concerning religious minorities. The European Union, too, finds itself contributing to the push for human rights in Pakistan, since this bloc considers its GSP+ status-an important status for Pakistan, considering that the country benefits from reduced tariffs in exchange for adherence to certain human rights standards (Jahangir, 2000).

The US, UK, and Canada condemn high-profile human rights violations in Pakistan while, conversely, such abuses by the US led to making foreign and military assistance conditional upon improvements in human rights practices. INGOs such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the International Commission of Jurists also have been strong voices in articulating demands for human rights reforms in Pakistan. Traditionally, foreign governments, especially the Western democracies, have always been heavily involved in exercise diplomatic pressure on Pakistan to uphold human rights. Such lobbies include United States, the European Union, and the United Kingdom in issues like freedom of speech and expression, religious freedom, and rights of women in that country. International NGOs like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and International Crisis Group are periodically reporting cases of human rights violations concerning Pakistan and are bringing

*Human Rights Violations and Government Accountability: A Constitutional Perspective and International Responsibility*

their cases to the fore by working in tandem with local NGOs in order to get further assistance (Frohardt, 1999).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Conclusion***

A country born out of colonialism in 1947, which has written constitution promising democratic governance and the safeguarding of basic human rights, is Pakistan. Systemic human rights violation continues to persist in Pakistan despite its promises of safeguards through the constitution, all stemming from political instability in the form of military interventions and above all, corruption. Political turmoil in the form of continued military coups and weak democratic structure has made these constitutional promises hollow. On paper, these are excellent rights that are dear to the people. In practice, however, they are almost always acted in gross violation with impunity, and the trend in the Pakistan political landscape is the most disturbing: successively, governments used law enforcement agencies, intelligence services, and the judiciary against their political rivals. This perversion of power sometimes takes the form of arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, extra-judicial killings, or curbs on freedom of speech. Enforced disappearances are largely political in sensitive areas such as Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh; it often comprises the victims who are either political activists or journalists or human rights defenders.

Freedom of speech and the press is guaranteed under Pakistan's Constitution, but these guarantees are usually curtailed particularly when their cause is posed by political dissent. Opposition has claimed that the state, always aided by military and intelligence wings, harasses censors, and silenced journalists and activists who criticized government policies or brought about corrupt practices to the fore. Journalists can be subjected to threats, intimidations, and violence that can endanger the culture of democracy in the country. The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act now scrutinizes digital spaces. Judiciary use has justified authoritarian rule or legitimized the persecution of opponents. Military courts have faced several criticisms in connection with transparency as well as the procedure of a trial. It has also been accused of delivering judgments against political activists in the conflict-torn territories. Abuses followed by call to change from civil society organizations and human rights defenders constituted another passage of years. International pressure, more so from the United Nations and human rights bodies, forced Pakistan to face the globe in terms of its human rights record.

### ***Recommendations***

There are many guarantees of human rights lying embedded in the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973. The problem still remains to convert them into action. The country needs an appraisal of its socio-political situation and the international standards that ought to be proposed with some recommendations to build up protection for human rights. A pragmatic framework on rights protection is provided by the Constitution but the challenges are not of a less kind in the form of socio-economic inequality, political instability, and religious extremism, weakness of the institutional framework, and a military regime or rule. Strengthening institutions to strengthen human rights, accountability in violations, legal aid, and access to justice are very important. To fully actualize the recognized rights by human rights, such as

*Human Rights Violations and Government Accountability: A Constitutional Perspective and International Responsibility*

independent oversight over state institutions, legal aid, and protection for vulnerable groups, a strengthened constitutional framework is called upon for the country. These require a multifaceted approach: strengthening democratic institutions; judicial independence, and a culture of accountability.

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*Human Rights Violations and Government Accountability: A Constitutional Perspective and International Responsibility*

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