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Human Rights Protection in Pakistan: Constitutional Guarantees, International Legal Commitments, and Contemporary Challenges

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a detailed study of human rights protection in Pakistan with emphasis on the intersection of constitutional guarantees international legal commitments and contemporary challenges. It traces the historical development of fundamental rights from early post-independence constitutions through the pivotal 1973 Constitution that established a comprehensive rights framework and strengthened the role of the judiciary in enhancing protection. The research examines Pakistan ratification of key international human rights instruments along with domestication mechanisms and the obstacles encountered in their implementation. Institutional gaps security related constraints socio-cultural barriers restrictions on freedom of expression and emerging issues such as climate change impacts and technological surveillance are critically discussed. Through doctrinal legal analysis thematic review and contextual evaluation, the article highlights the persistent gap between strong legal provisions and their realization on the ground. It argues that this divide must be bridged through multifaceted reforms including institutional strengthening legislative harmonization social sensitization and greater involvement of civil society. The findings underscore the critical relevance of human rights to democratic consolidation social cohesion and sustainable national development. By offering balanced insights and practical recommendations the article contributes to scholarly and policy debates on strengthening human rights mechanisms in Pakistan and other developing democracies.

Keywords: Human Rights Protection, Pakistan Constitution, International Commitments, Implementation Gaps, Judicial Activism, Contemporary Challenges

Introduction

The legal and administrative system was inherited by Pakistan at independence in 1947, and had been influenced significantly by British colonial administration. Colonial government focused on imposition of central authority, extractive institutions and discretionary enforcement of law, where state laws were most often enforced to maintain control over individual rights. This legacy had a significant impact on the developments of the constitution in the post-independence era. The Government of India Act 1935 was an interim measure until 1956 when India tried its first constitution containing basic fundamental rights along with Islamic provisions (Saleemi, 2024). Political unrest followed, and the Constitution of 1962 under military rule provides less protection for citizens. An important turning point was the adoption of a new Constitution in 1973, drafted by a directly elected legislature, that contained a comprehensive bill of rights in Part II that protects equality before the law, freedoms of speech, assembly and religion, and protection against arbitrary arrest. In subsequent decades, with judicial activism in the form of public interest litigation, these rights were slowly expanded by interpretation. But these assurances were often interrupted and curtailed by periods of

authoritarian rule and security concerns. Regulations from the colonial era, like the Frontier Crimes Regulation, continued in the tribal areas and strengthened parallel legal systems which conflictingly challenged the uniform application of human rights. Researchers who have studied this trajectory emphasize the role of historical dynamics of elite domination and institutional inertia in influencing current dynamics of human rights (Butt, 2023).

Protection of human rights holds a special importance in the socio-political fabric of Pakistan as it is the cornerstone of a true democratic system of governance, rule of law and long-term stability of the country. In a diverse ethnic population, sectarian tensions and significant socio-economic gaps in society, effective human rights mechanisms advance inclusivity and mitigate grievances that can escalate and lead to conflict. Stronger protections contribute to greater public trust in state institutions, increase accountability of those in power and provide conducive conditions for sustainable development. On the other hand, when violations are persistent, they lead to the deterioration of democratic processes, to the loss of social cohesion and to the criticism of the international community that impacts on foreign relations and economic opportunities (Jilani, 1998). When basic rights are not legal rights, there is systematic violation of the rule of law, arbitrary uses of power and a lack of Government. On the one hand, firm institutional responses to safeguard human rights are critical balances in the face of ongoing challenges of extremism and political polarization in the guarantee of civilian dominance and judicial autonomy. The experience of other states (international) demonstrates that those states, which take rights protection seriously, are more politically mature and resistant to authoritarian backslides. For Pakistan to be able to live up to the ideals of justice and equality which were espoused by the founding fathers, it needs to apply these principles in every aspect of public life (Hassan, 2026).

The Pakistani human rights scenario is a compound scenario comprising of well-articulated constitutional rights domestically, and international demands and at times, unappealing realities. Constitutional 1973 is more normatively founded on justiciable fundamental rights and Principles of Policy are less specific in their area to establish the larger state objectives. On the international front Pakistan has ratified basic documents such as International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention against Torture that have incorporated numerous standards in the legislation. These responsibilities have been claimed periodically by higher courts in the interpretation of the constitutionality of the provisions. There are implementation challenges however which are caused by institutional capacity constraints, political interference and societal attitudes. Monitoring bodies make regular reports on the differences between the formal commitments and implementation, such as for minorities, freedom of expression and access to justice. The disconnection is due to the structural aspects such as the separation of federal and provincial divisions based on the constitutional changes, resources limitation in the oversight institutions and conflicts between security and rights observance (Abbas, 2025; Mazhar, 2023). Awareness raising of and sometimes response to violations have been a mainstay of civil society actors and judicial action, but there are system problems in attaining full implementation of domestic guarantees and international obligations.

The article argues that Pakistan though has substantive constitutional guarantees and has made significant international legal commitments, yet the contemporary challenges loom large in the background and prevent Pakistan from providing comprehensive protection of human rights which demand multifaceted reforms (Parveen, 2025). It critically analyzes the historical development of the constitutional architecture, the incorporating of treaties and the obstacles at the bottom of the system providing nuanced analyses. This idea of bridging the existing

implementation gap is the main theme, as it requires, apart from legal harmonization, institutional reinforcement, cultural sensitization and political will. The study covers the post-independence developments up to recent years with focus on significant milestones, contributions of the judiciary and the issues emerging in the process. Limits are that, due to practicality, especially in sensitive contexts, extensive fieldwork was not possible, and primary sources were seldom available, and so were publicly accessible documents. The article presents an effort to contribute to the field of study and policy interventions to reinforce Pakistan human rights framework for improved democratic governance and wellbeing of society in these aspects (Hassan, 2020).

Literature Review

The rich body of scholarly research on human rights in South Asia and in Pakistan in particular has enabled the analysis of the national experience in relation to postcolonial regional patterns and the shared issues of democratic consolidation. In order to point out the consequences of partition remnants and shared legal inheritances analysts tend to make comparisons between Pakistan India and Bangladesh (Hassan, 2020). The studies highlight the role of international observers and local nongovernmental organizations in documenting violations and holding accountable. Mixed methods are often applied in the studies that involve not only a doctrinal intervention of statutes and judgments but also a qualitative intervention of the impacts of the research in the society (Khan, 2022). Throughout this body of work similar patterns of tension between the state claims to sovereignty and the expectations of Universalist human rights are found. Pakistani scholars and diaspora scholars are also making their contributions in the field by offering an inside knowledge of the cultural negotiations in the process of rights implementation (Siddiqui, 2024). Pakistan, in general, belongs to a South Asian corpus of literature that investigates the problem of the majorities and minorities protection and the need to have civil societies in authoritarian inclined societies. This type of scholarship can help us to comprehend how historical contingencies and the present-day structures of power affect the achievement of human dignity in various multiethnic polities (Rehman, 2023).

The different themes dealt with in literature are constitutionalism and basic rights and Pakistan relations with the tools of international human rights and deep analysis of the chronic flaws of enforcement. Constitutional scholarship breaks down the structure of rights protections offered by successive charters that have stressed the transformative power of judicial review to answer rights claims. The investigations of international commitments include the history of the domestication process of international commitments ratification and the reporting periodically to the bodies of the treaty and also the frictions with national security priorities (Abbas, 2025; Malik, 2024). Implementation defects analyses look at the structural institutional and sociocultural barriers that can impede the realization of legal rights. These analyses are based on real numbers and data of field reports and statistics to prove their arguments about different enforcement by geographical area and population groups (Farooq, 2023). The literatures raise thematically the intersections between priorities of development of rights and security governance and identity politics. Scholars object to the formalistic perspective which ignores power relations and reality on the grassroots level. This thematic focus provides readers with an in-depth understanding of the developments and challenges in the field of human rights in Pakistan (Ahmed, 2025).

The language of academia has gone through various phases in tandem with the constitution alterations in the home nation the impact of military and world events and the novel issues of the society (Butt, 2023). Initial texts struggled to find a grounding on the inclusion of rights in the face of political instability and tyrannical interferences. Later stages looked at the

constitutional structure of 1973 and its suspensions in nondemocratic interludes and the impact of religious directed policies on the enjoyment of pluralistic rights. The effects of counterterrorism on civil liberties the displacement effects and the impacts of counterterrorism on international alliances were further considered following the 9/11 (Saleemi, 2024; Iqbal, 2025). Recent efforts are in the new directions of technological surveillance environmental rights and the rights of marginalized communities. The theoretical orientations extend between liberal constitutionalist views that stress on the limitation of state authority and models that emphasize on international compliance socialization and acculturation and critical models that criticize Eurocentric biases and advance universalism in a more contextualized way. These frameworks can be used to gain a more insight into agency structure and norm diffusion processes. Nevertheless, there remain gaps in long-term empirical tracking of the policy results cross-examinations of federal processes and prospective forecasts that consider the new world issues. The current article addresses some of these gaps by developing synthesized evaluation and areas for reform (Zahid, 2024; Ali & Shah, 2023).

Problem Statement

With strong constitutional protections and adoption of key international human rights conventions, Pakistan has yet to bridge the gap between its constitutional guarantees and implementation. The fundamental rights have been enshrined in the 1973 Constitution, and successive governments have been making efforts to harmonize domestic laws with the international bill of rights, but enforcement is still very weak. Frequently, institutional weaknesses, political pressures on the judiciary, limited resources in oversight bodies and conflict between security needs and civil liberties compromise protection. In addition, vulnerabilities are further compounded by socio-cultural challenges, such as religious extremism, gender inequalities, and discrimination against minorities. Implementation shortfalls have worsened due to post 9/11 security policies, the military presence, and federal provincial coordination problems. Consequently, problems like enforced disappearances, restrictions on freedom of expression, violence against women and minorities, and lack of access to justice continue to weaken the public's confidence in state institutions and thus have an adverse effect on democratic consolidation. This gap not only infringes on citizens' rights but also hinders sustainable development, social harmony and Pakistan's international image and requires immediate scholarly and policy consideration to close the implementation gap.

Objectives

1. To analyze the constitutional guarantees for human rights in Pakistan and their practical application.
2. To examine Pakistan's international legal commitments and the extent of their domestication and compliance.
3. To identify and critically assess contemporary challenges hindering effective human rights protection.
4. To propose actionable recommendations for bridging the gap between legal provisions and implementation.
5. To contribute to the broader discourse on human rights in developing democracies.

Research Questions

1. What are the key constitutional provisions for human rights protection in Pakistan, and how effective have they been in practice?
2. How has Pakistan incorporated its international human rights obligations into domestic law, and what are the main areas of compliance or non-compliance?

3. What are the primary contemporary challenges (political, institutional, socio-cultural, and economic) affecting human rights realization in Pakistan?
4. What role do state institutions (judiciary, parliament, executive) and non-state actors play in advancing or obstructing human rights protection?
5. What reform measures can strengthen human rights protection mechanisms in the country?

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative doctrinal and analytical research methodology to examine the protection of human rights in Pakistan through examining the provisions of the Constitution of Pakistan, international legal obligations and the challenges in the current scenario. The approach involves the systematic use of primary law sources: Constitution of Pakistan 1973, Supreme Court and High Courts' crucial cases, ratified international human rights treaties and their domestication instruments. Prospective secondary sources of historical information from scholarly articles, reports of national and international human rights groups, government policy documents and annual reports on human rights provide context and empirical context. Thematic analysis aims on central aspects of constitutional provisions, treaty non-compliance and compliance obstacles and comparative legal techniques reveal similarities and differences between domestic law and international norms. The historical analysis identifies evolutionary changes from post-independence times till the present, which helps identify patterns and changes that can be attributed to political changes and security dynamics. The research is appropriately grounded, with appropriate cross-checking of sources and identification of limitations, which include place and/or access restrictions (e.g. access difficulties in sensitive locations, use of public documents). This methodology will allow for a holistic, well balanced and critically informed assessment, which will help in drafting informed proposals for strengthening human rights mechanisms in Pakistan.

Constitutional Guarantees for Human Rights in Pakistan

The historical development of the fundamental rights in the Pakistani constitutions shows the national search towards the balance in the democratic order in the country in the conditions of political instability and ideological conflicts. The 1956 Constitution was the first significant effort to enshrine rights with Islamic values and universal rights including equality and freedoms. Its life and practical influence were curtailed however by political turmoil. Military influence in the Constitution of 1962 took on a presidential system, with a more limited bill of rights, and focused on Principles of Policy which were not directly enforceable. In this system, state stability was prioritized over individual safeguards which frequently led to watered down safeguards. The 1973 Constitution which had been drafted by an elected constituent assembly brought about a transformative change by setting out in Part II a comprehensive and justiciable body of fundamental rights that social maturity and popular sovereignty. This development of partial protections to a full rights charter exemplifies the continuing issue of Pakistan to balance democratic value with security and ideological demands (Mazhar, 2023; Jilani, 1998).

In Chapter I Articles 8 to 28 in Part II of the 1973 Constitution, there are Fundamental Rights, and in Chapter II Articles 29 to 40, there are Principles of Policy. The former has a direct enforceable means via the courts and the latter are directives aimed at guiding the governance but with a broadly increasing application by the judiciary. Article 25 of non-discrimination on grounds of religion race caste sex or place of birth is a key right that includes equality before the law and equal protection. The right to assemble, speak, and associate with others, freedom of religion and the right to profess and propagate faith are all guaranteed. The protections of due process also encompass protections against forced labor and the retrospective punishment

of arbitrary arrest detention slavery. The protection of minorities and women in line of non-discrimination and special measures of vulnerable groups are explicitly provided. All these points constitute a detailed charter that is in line with international traditions and allows Pakistan to take into account the unique socio-cultural environment (Hassan, 2020; Parveen, 2025).

An intensive legal examination and comparative study of the stipulations of the constitution and the judicial interpretation of the constitution brings out the dynamic role of the Supreme Court in the enforcement and expansion of human rights guarantees. The Court has applied public interest litigation and *sui motu* proceedings to turn text into life and thus changed constitutional text into protections. In the landmark case of Benazir Bhutto v. Federation of Pakistan (PLD 1988 SC 416) the Court made *locus standi* more liberal where a citizen could petition the enforcement of fundamental rights in the matters of national concern and democratized the access to justice. The Court in Shehla Zia v. WAPDA (PLD 1994 SC 693) identified the right to clean environment as a right to life under Article 9 which sets a precedent in jurisprudence of environmental right. These cases illustrate how the judiciary has increasingly advanced the interpretation of fundamental rights to be well beyond its literal reading with reference to the constitutional values as well as to international human rights standards. The Court has always made it clear that even basic rights are not just declarations but enforceable guarantees that should be respected even in relation to strong state institutions (Mazhar, 2023).

Later on, the Supreme Court has taken some bold actions in tackling the modern-day issues of human rights. In the enforced disappearances cases, the Court has given orders to the intelligence agencies and provincial governments to trace missing persons and hold them accountable. Decisions on the rights of minorities have strengthened the defense of discrimination and violence and guided the state to protect freedom of religion. The Court has invalidated practices that are discriminatory and has defended the right of women to inheritance and political rights. These decisions exemplify the judiciary as a constitutionalism watchdog that may sometimes fill vacancies in the legislative and executive branches of government. The legal discussion presents that although judicial activism has promoted the protection of the rights, it has been criticized as having possible overreach and the lack of enforcement of its orders by other organs of state. This conflict shows that there is a necessity of more institutional coordination to convert court decisions into practical results (Hassan and Qasim, 2025).

The strengths of the constitutional provisions can be seen in the fact that they are highly enumerated with a broad justifiability and can be adapted through progressive interpretation; this has given voices to the marginalized. Nevertheless, some inherent restrictions remain such as the non-justifiability of some Principles of Policy that can be suspended in proclaimed emergencies and some are incompatible with security legislation. Though offering flexibility, these characteristics open the possibility of rights dilution that serves to highlight why judicial and societal vigilance is needed to ensure the fullness of Constitution protective potential. The Supreme Court jurisprudence as a whole explains the possibilities as well as limitations of constitutional assurances towards the promotion of human rights in Pakistan. The legal review and comparison with international standards demonstrate that the domestic provisions are strong but their practical implementation requires a continuity in the vigilance of the judicial institutions' reforms in the institutional framework and establishment of the society towards the rights-based governance (Saleemi, 2024).

International Legal Commitments and Their Implementation

Pakistan has signed up to various important international human rights conventions and adopted the stance of formally accepting international standards while addressing local issues based on its constitutional and cultural context. Since independence, the impact of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been profound on the thinking of the Pakistani legal profession through its impact on the values laid down in the successive constitutions of Pakistan. The Convention against All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention against Torture are some of the key instruments that are ratified. The accessions took place at different moments, and frequently accompanied by a democratic opening, or reaction to an international advocacy campaign. These treaties were the first in which Pakistan expressed its readiness to accept external review of its practices and its desire to introduce universal principles in governance in Pakistan. These have allowed for the use of provisions of the treaty in advocacy and litigation work by civil society actors and by lawyers. The large numbers of ratifications do not, however, always mean that there has been a strong match between the formal act of ratification and the actual adoption of new behavior by state institutions. This trend highlights the need to see ratification as a starting point, not a dead end, in the process of improving the protection of rights (Ministry of Human Rights Pakistan, 2022).

The mechanisms of international human rights law incorporation in Pakistan are of a dualist type and require a change in the legislation to incorporate treaties into the country's domestic law instead of a monist type where ratified treaties automatically became part of the municipal law. In Pakistan courts have developed judicious approach and interpreted the clauses of the fundamental rights contained in the Constitution with reference to international obligations. The language of treaties does a bit of parsing where there is ambiguity and it does a bit of making sense of equality due process and dignity (NCHRP, 2023). This judicial method has helped incrementally align without the need for full-flavored, statutory changes in every case. Thus, many treaties have no provision of in-depth incorporation which could raise questions and conflicts concerning jurisdiction and type of treaties. The dualist approach, legal scholars note, can give rise to the principle of parliamentary sovereignty and, in the event of political unwillingness, to slow down or reduce the impact. In the long-term, the status of international law in domestic adjudication has been reinforced by superior courts which has led to a hybrid framework of international norms and national realities (International Commission of Jurists, 2025).

The issues of alignment or conflict between Pakistan international commitments and domestic legislation are good examples of the complexities involved in treaty implementation in a context of security concerns, religious sensitivities and federalism. Some counter terrorism legislation designed to address domestic and regional security threats have been brought up regarding compatibility with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights protections for fair trial and arbitrary detention. Similarly, the blasphemy provisions have been raised at international fora for violations of freedom of expression and religious minorities due to their over breadth and freedom of expression concerns (Human Rights Watch, 2024). Positive alignments can be found, for instance, in child protection, where treaty-based standards, which are explicitly referenced in or incorporated into domestic laws, lead to actual changes in laws, or in legislation on gender-based violence, where domestic laws make reference to treaty standards or are based on such standards. These images illustrate not only the potential for coherent synergy and the ongoing problems at which national security and cultural concerns

appear to clash, but also the limits of progress in this new century. These illustrations show not only the possibilities for the harmonious integration amongst the possibilities, but also the extent to which progress can be made in the present century. There is an ongoing debate between the state authorities and the treaty bodies, however, where conflicts are debated and hopefully resolved by reviewing legislation and strengthening of capacity building (Amnesty International, 2025).

Pakistan is a party to ratified treaties and fulfills its reporting requirements as per those treaties, and joins in the Universal Periodic Review process at the United Nations Human Rights Council in a constructive manner. The UPR has been a valuable forum for peer review to provide action-oriented recommendations, on topics such as women's political participation, freedom of the media, and enforced disappearances (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2024). Government responses have been more varied, with acceptance of many suggestions and explanations for constraints in the context and for the on-going reform work. There have been examples of violations, like custodial abuses, and the enforcement of media and transgender rights laws that have been brought to light by international forums, as well as stories of successful domestications, such as progressive laws about transgender rights and juvenile justice. The case studies illustrate how the potential of international mechanisms can be to drive positive change and highlight where implementation is lagging behind commitments. Reporting cycles and follow-up mechanisms should continue to be effective instruments for turning international calls to action into continuous domestic efforts and accountability (Ministry of Human Rights Pakistan, 2022).

Contemporary Challenges in Human Rights Protection: A Regional Perspective

Pakistan grapples with complex institutional and governance challenges that seriously hamper effective human rights protection. Weak enforcement machinery in law enforcement agencies fosters impunity with violations frequently unreported due to under-resourcing insufficient training and widespread corruption. Police reforms remain incomplete amid persistent allegations of custodial torture and extrajudicial practices that erode public confidence in the justice system. Judicial delays caused by massive case backlogs and resource shortages deny timely remedies especially to victims from marginalized communities. These institutional deficiencies create a vicious cycle where constitutional guarantees exist on paper but fail to deliver accountability or redress in practice (Human Rights Watch, 2024; Hassan & Qasim, 2025). Governance coordination problems between federal and provincial levels result in fragmented rights protection initiatives. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive capacity building transparent oversight mechanisms and strong political commitment to depoliticize key institutions. In comparison with India where stronger institutional mechanisms and public interest litigation have yielded better enforcement outcomes Pakistan institutional weaknesses appear more pronounced due to greater military influence (Hossain, 2008).

Security and conflict-related issues continue to exert significant negative impact on human rights enjoyment particularly in militancy-affected regions. Counter-terrorism legislation though necessary for national stability has occasionally compromised due process enabling prolonged detentions without adequate judicial oversight (International Commission of Jurists, 2025). Enforced disappearances remain a highly sensitive and unresolved problem with affected families receiving little accountability. Military operations in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while targeting militants have caused civilian displacement livelihood destruction and allegations of excessive force. These dynamics create difficult trade-offs between security needs and individual rights calling for greater transparency human rights-compliant operational protocols and robust independent oversight (Abbas & Kalanauri, 2024; Udagama, 2010).

Compared to Sri Lanka post-conflict reconciliation efforts and Bangladesh handling of internal security Pakistan approach reveals deeper challenges stemming from ongoing insurgencies and civil-military imbalances (International Crisis Group, 2009).

Deep-rooted socio-cultural and economic barriers constitute formidable obstacles to human rights realization in Pakistan. Gender inequality persists through high levels of violence against women limited access to education and employment and discriminatory customary practices despite progressive legislation. Religious extremism fuels minority persecution targeting Ahmadis Christians Hindus and Shias through violence social exclusion and blasphemy-related accusations. Caste-based discrimination further marginalizes segments of society impeding social mobility and access to services (Parveen, 2025; Khan & Bukhari, 2024). Large portions of the population lack basic economic rights amid poverty inequality and uneven development. Conservative societal attitudes and insufficient state investment in inclusive policies reinforce these intersectional violations. In contrast India has made notable progress on economic and social rights through judicial interventions while Bangladesh has advanced gender-focused development initiatives highlighting Pakistan relative lag in addressing socio-cultural barriers (Sen, 2005; De Silva, 2011).

Freedom of expression in Pakistan faces mounting pressures from media censorship digital surveillance and controversial blasphemy laws that create chilling effects on journalist's activists and citizens. While digital platforms have expanded information access, they have also enabled new forms of monitoring and content regulation raising serious privacy concerns. Blasphemy laws controversies frequently trigger mob violence and misuse against minorities or dissenters. Emerging challenges such as climate change disproportionately affect vulnerable populations through displacement and livelihood loss. Refugee and migrant issues particularly involving Afghan arrivals add further strain on rights protection frameworks. Technological surveillance expands state reach into private spheres often without adequate safeguards. Civil society organizations media and international pressure play indispensable roles in documenting violations advocating reforms and filling service gaps where state capacity is limited. Their work remains essential for accountability despite operating in increasingly constrained environments. Regional comparisons show that India stronger civil society and Bangladesh development-oriented approaches offer valuable lessons for Pakistan (Amnesty International, 2012; Cohen, 2007; International Crisis Group, 2009; Sen, 2005).

The comparative perspective across South Asia underscores both shared challenges and distinct national trajectories in human rights protection. Pakistan shares with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka the difficulty of balancing security imperatives with civil liberties particularly in counter-terrorism contexts while India demonstrates how robust federalism and judicial independence can mitigate implementation gaps (Hossain, 2008; Sen, 2005). All four countries have ratified core international treaties yet face criticism during Universal Periodic Reviews for weak domestication. Regional cooperation mechanisms remain underutilized for sharing best practices on judicial innovations development-focused rights strategies and post-conflict reconciliation. Pakistan can draw important lessons from India expansive public interest litigation Bangladesh gender and economic rights advancements and Sri Lanka reconciliation efforts while addressing its specific issues of military dominance and religious extremism (Udagama, 2010). Strengthening democratic institutions civil society engagement and cross-border learning across South Asia will be crucial for collective advancement of human rights standards and regional stability (De Silva, 2011).

Conclusion

This study on Human rights protection in Pakistan reveals a complex picture of strong constitutional provisions and relevant international legal requirements, set against the backdrop of persistent challenges that are currently. The Constitution of 1973 is wide-ranging and the interpretation of fundamental rights has evolved over time with the intervention of an activist judiciary giving rise to 'public interest litigation'. There is also a formal convergence with international norms related to civil, political, economic, social rights as Pakistan has signed a number of international instruments. These foundations provide a strong normative framework for a rights respecting society to be built on. Institutional weaknesses, restrictions from security, socio cultural factors, and delays in implementation, however, does not fully reflect the implementation of legal promises. There is a need to persist in efforts to further strengthen security laws, social inclusion and cooperation between State authorities and civil society as a means for addressing these challenges. If such a reform is not implemented, human rights will continue to be a threat not only to the democratic consolidation but, also, to social stability and national development. Realizing the aspirations outlined in the constitution and commitments made to the international community into tangible benefits for every citizen of Pakistan requires the political commitment, independence of the judiciary, as well as an active and engaged citizen. Human rights are essential not only for each and every individual to live with dignity but also for overall long-time state and society resilience and prosperity of Pakistan.

Pakistan is therefore at a crossroads in the future and if positive strides are made in the human rights arena, it can shape the destiny of its democracy and its image in the world. Capacity building, in order to restore public trust on functioning of the state mechanisms, is necessary, especially institutional capacity to fight against corruption and to provide justice in time. Security policies need to be reconsidered to ensure that legitimate threats are not met with a denial of due process and fundamental freedoms, especially in conflict affected areas. Awareness creation through education and implementation of inclusive policies can help achieve socio cultural transformation and overcome gender inequalities and religious prejudices and minority persecution. New challenges like the effects of climate change, technological surveillance and migrant rights, need to be addressed in a way that anticipates policy responses incorporating human rights in the initial stage. Civil society media and international partners will continue to be crucial in advocacy and support monitoring. Based on these lessons and rectifying the voids Pakistan can move towards a rights-respecting and fairer governance model that is rooted in its constitutional vision and international responsibilities. We will need the joint participation of every stakeholder in the state, civil society, and citizens in developing a nation where dignity, equality and justice will be enjoyed for all without discrimination on basis of their background and beliefs. Such a transformation will not only meet the legal requirements, but will also help unlock the potential of Pakistan people to play their part in South Asia and beyond towards stability and sustainable development.

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