

## **Gender Quota and Women-Friendly Legislation: A Case Study of Pakistan**

### **Abstract:**

Gender quotas represent an effective policy measure to increase women's representation in legislatures, however, there are competing claims in the literature about what kind and how much of women's presence in political institutions is required for the adoption of pro-women policies and legislation. The study aims to explore the relationship between the increasing number of female legislators in the parliament of Pakistan and their impact on the political representation of 'women's interests' in parliamentary processes (debates on draft bills / legal initiatives either as private member bill or government bill) and legislative outcomes. The theoretical foundation of this study is based on critical mass theory, claiming that women cannot influence legislative politics in the parliament until and unless they move from a small minority to a large minority, or "critical mass" (Dahlerup, 1988). For this purpose, the case study of Pakistan, one of the first countries worldwide to introduce a gender quota system, will aim to test critical mass theory for a Global South study (a desideratum in the state of the art in terms of empirical studies as well as theorizing), employing a qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with female legislators along with an in-depth analysis of the proceedings of three legislative periods 12th (2002-07), 13th (2008-13), and 14th (2013-18) – given the reintroduction of reserved seat provisions in 2001/2.