

Challenges to Female’s Participation in Dispute Resolution Councils in District Peshawar

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Abstract

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government introduced Dispute Resolution Councils (DRCs) in 2014 to address domestic issues and conflicts at the local level and avoid the high costs and lengthy processes of the formal justice system. This study aims to assess female's participation in DRCs in District Peshawar. The study uses qualitative methods and non-probability sampling techniques, focusing on the female's challenges hampering their active participation in DRCs. The data was gathered through 40 interviews, FGDs & documentary analysis. Results show limited involvement of female in DRCs due to capability gaps, institutional weaknesses, gender preconceptions, socio-cultural restrictions and low education levels. Remedies include gender-responsive structural arrangements, community sensitization, civic education programs, trust building, improved selection standards, linkages with regular courts, capacity enhancement, increased outreach, data protection, provision of handsome honoraria, and system support to involve more female in leadership positions under the DRC system.

Keywords: Dispute Resolution Councils, justice system, female rights, police, gender-based violence

Introduction

Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of creative alternatives for responding to conflicts, alternatives to passive or aggressive response, - alternative to Violence (Dorothy Thompson, Upadhyay, 2022). According to Sandra Day O’Connor “The courts of this country should not be the places where resolution of disputes begins. They should be the places where the disputes end after alternative methods of resolving disputes have been considered and tried”

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is a peaceful dispute resolution forum for general population, differing from conventional justice systems, and effectively resolving conflicts (Agarwal, 2005). Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms uphold justice, promote peace& harmony, and strengthen social bonding by promoting cooperation among communities (Strenlight, 2007)

Human societies evolved ethical values, emphasizing peaceful coexistence and dispute resolution through negotiation, mediation, and arbitration, as social animals (Murphy, 1983). Disturbances vary across nations and are influenced by cultural values. Traditional dispute resolution methods like Jirga in Afghanistan, Panchayet in India and Pakistan, and mediation committees in China offer alternative solutions (Wardak, 2014). Pakistan faces challenges in dispensing peace since 2001

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due to international politics, regional geopolitical dynamics, war against terror, and internal law and order issues, resulting in delayed resolution of cases and delayed justice.

Female's Participation in Conflict Situations

Females play a crucial role in conflict prevention and rehabilitation, but their marginal role in decision-making limits their ability to promote peace. Gender inclusive approaches to dispute resolution are essential for supporting policy measures and ensuring female's political representation. The 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on women in Beijing emphasized upon female's role in peace activities, focusing on grassroots efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts globally (UNESCO, 1995).

Over the past decade, the importance of female's engagement in peace processes has been recognized and emphasized through numerous international institutions, resolutions and member state commitments. In October 2000, the UN Security Council through SCR 1325 formally recognized the relationship between female, peace and security and the critical importance of female's participation as reflected in leadership, empowerment, and decision-making (USAID, 2000). Peace and security are crucial for economic growth, development, and female's empowerment. They must be politically and economically empowered, represented adequately in decision-making, and protected during wars and conflicts. The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Security Council resolution 1325 reaffirm this importance.

Regional Context of Alternative Dispute Resolution:

Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Pakistan is a low-cost approach to conflict resolution, utilizing Consultations, Negotiation, and Arbitration. It is recognized by local communities and legal experts, avoiding extensive and expensive legal procedures. Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms occupied significant place in China as well, where mediation was used as best alternative for conflict management. In the ancient times, Confucianism emerged as a leading social philosophy in China, which firmly believed on peaceful coexistence and justice in human interactions. Mediation is crucial in Nepal's alternative dispute resolution systems, as people prefer alternative methods due to lengthy and expensive processes in conventional justice systems. The local self-government act authorizes village committees to resolve communal disputes through mediation (USAID, 2009). Madaripur Legal Aid Association, Bangladesh's alternative dispute resolution body, works with local elders since 1978 (Sattar, 2007). Indian Subcontinent employs Kalu, Ghana, and Sreni dispute resolution mechanisms, with Ghana involving community

elders. Jirga is a well-established dispute resolution institution in Afghanistan, divided into four major types: Korany, Quomi, Sarkari, and Loya Jirga. Alternative dispute resolution forums in the Indian subcontinent date back to pre-colonial times. The Jirga system was the most effective method for resolving conflicts. Pakistan maintains the conventional justice system, including Jirga in NWFP, FATA, Baluchistan, and Faislo and Panchayat in Sindh and Punjab.

The use of dispute resolution councils at community and council levels has helped resolve conflicts among individuals and tribes in Pakistan. These mechanisms address flaws in the government's establishment and legal process, as conflicts often stem from government measures, inconsistent regional and global arrangements, and socio-cultural constraints. The country is implementing various measures to improve access to justice, including the arbitration act, the Musalihat Anjuman act, and the Strengthening Rule of Law Program. Alternative dispute resolution has increased with the establishment of Dispute Resolution Councils (DRCs) by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police. These councils were officially introduced in 2015 and are operational in 24 districts of KP.

Objective of the Study

- To examine the challenges in female's participation in DRCs in district Peshawar.
- To know about the status of female's participation in decision making process in these councils in Peshawar district.

Significance of Research

This study examines female's involvement and participation in dispute resolution mechanisms in Pakistan, focusing on Peshawar. It highlights the importance of female as a change instrument and identifies structural and societal hurdles to female's participation in local justice systems. This study explores female's participation in dispute resolution mechanisms and in alternative mechanisms. It will inform scholars, analysts, and lawgivers, and influence female's involvement in Peshawar's dispute resolution councils.

Literature Review

Mayer (2012) offers a unique perspective on conflict resolution and preventative measures, focusing on a wider issue than traditional reconciliation or ADR. He promotes a conciliation approach, considering motives and values, and defining various aspects of disputes, dynamics, and reasons for conflict emergence (Mayer, 2012) Female effectively contribute to conflict prevention, resolution, mitigation, and post-conflict reconstruction. Organizations should produce peacekeeping assignments,

peaceful conciliation, peace building, humanitarian assistance, and international tribunals from female's perspectives (Bouta, Frerks, 2002).

New conflict resolution techniques, such as mediation, arbitration, and reconciliation, have impacted minority populations worldwide. Critics argue that these methods are part of a liberal reaction to human rights issues, involving multicultural challenges and issues related to religion, nationality, affiliation, and identification. Gender and equity in legal aid debates explores how female's independence and judgmental capacities are reflected in conflict management methods and communal experiences. Bano highlights the intricacies of these procedures in various cultural settings (Bano, n.d)

Pakistan faces multiple challenges in accessing justice due to high costs involved and delayed processes, leading to a shift from formal to informal dispute resolution mechanisms. Traditional forums like Jirga and Panchayat remain, while arbitration councils, union councils, and conciliation courts were created to address domestic matters and mild disputes. However, these bodies struggle with inherent flaws, limiting their effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes (Babakhel, 2015).

Pakistan has robust Alternative Dispute Resolution legislation, overseen by the Arbitration Act 1940. Other legislation, like Family Law 1961, Small Claims and Minor Offence Ordinance 2002, and the Code of Civil Procedure 2002, provide arbitration procedures. Before 2005, there was no formal structure for global arbitral proceedings. The Arbitration (International Investment Dispute) Act (2011) aims to attract international investors and improve the country's alternative dispute settlement framework (Iqbal, 2016).

Just Peace Initiatives (JPI) aims to build a better world with peace and justice by leveraging the skills of the uneducated and desperate community. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's public and private administration should work together to develop functional prototypes for regeneration and justice. The program demonstrates the public's role in deciding their own issues (Gohar, 2012). In 2019, the KP province implemented new Alternative Dispute Resolution law in six regions, including South Waziristan, Kurram, Orakzai, Khyber, Mohmand, and Bajaur. The province now has three distinct legislations for ADR: the KP Police Act of 2017, the KP Local Government Act of 2013, and the Local Government (Amendment) Act, 2019. These changes facilitate informal conciliation and allow deputy commissioners to form subdivision-level mediation committees.

Fazl e Hanan (2015) highlights the harsh realities of Pakistani culture, where female is often used as compensation in dispute resolution. This custom is prevalent in Swat and Kohistan, where female is often considered peaceful. However, this system is against female's fundamental rights and lacks awareness about existing legislation. The research

suggests the strong role of the judiciary to protect female and build public confidence in state institutions, avoiding informal institutions that may threaten female's status. The Maslihati council, established in major cities, has expanded to rural districts. KP Law Enforcement Agencies conducted an awareness program on DRC processes, aiming to design a unique DRC to address rural problems. Mainstream media outlets and information departments will raise public awareness. Community preachers will discuss DRCs after preaching sermons, gaining widespread support. DRCs have been successful in handling 2229 complaints, with 2128 amicably settled (Daily Ajj, 2017)

The very first Dispute Resolution Council was established in 2014. Some individuals are still apprehensive to approach the DRCs for the resolution of their disputes because of technical concerns. The administration as well as the relevant agencies must allow changes in the procedures so that policemen can independently engage these agencies in such circumstances and uphold the rule of law (Khan, 2021) Females and minorities in KP are participating in Dispute Resolution Councils (DRCs) to resolve problems. The initiative began in 2014 and now includes retired magistrates, prosecutors, public workers, academicians, parliamentarians, and politicians. The DRC Gulberg welcomed 2 additional representatives: Samuel, from a Christian community and Saima Ambreen, a female representative. "We have for the first time inducted one Christian member to settle various disputes between their (Christian) members as well as with those of other religions," Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Peshawar Mohammad Ali Gandapur said in November 2021. He stated that females are increasingly participating these initiatives to have a forum for female experiencing conflicts within their families or other fringe elements.

KP provincial police department reveals DRCs' effectiveness in resolving 5753 cases out of 6000, with 5404 settled directly and 313 handed over to higher judicial setups. 855 cases belong to Peshawar district (Akbar, 2016). Dispute Resolution councils were established in 2014 through the jurisdiction of Peshawar high court. It was decided that each police station will have one DRC setup to act as a local Jirga and provide easy and speedy justice to victims. Later on, this setup will be extended to union council level once government secured funding for the new system. Nasir Khan Durrani then IG police shared that these councils would act as powerful Jirga and will solve the disputes within cultural practices. Key influential belonging to different fields of life will be the members of these councils so their decisions will be based on justice and will be accepted by general population.

Research Methodology

This qualitative research focuses on government initiatives enhancing governance and female's participation in justice system. It employs exploratory research design and interpretivist philosophy, interpreting meaning based on participants' experiences and researcher's perceptions (Merriman, 1998). The research philosophy of this study is based on interpretivist, where the researcher is involved in interpreting the research to integrate one's interest in the study. Case study designed is selected for this study as it is most suitable design to relevant studies in social sciences. "The all-encompassing feature of a case study is its intense focus on a single phenomenon within its real-life context. Case studies are research situations where the number of variables of interest far outstrips the number of data points" (Yin 1999 p. 1211, Yin 1994 p. 13)

Research Population implies the compilation of entities which are the major subject matter of the research. In this study, population consists of the female who are participating and involved in DRCs, have benefited from these forums, members of dispute resolution councils, female who have access to these councils and Alternative Dispute Resolution Experts in the selected area. The study focused on the non-Probability sampling techniques (Denscombe, 2014). The Purposive sampling method is utilized to obtain information, as it is more effective in qualitative data collection. Forty (40) interviews are conducted with female participants, members of the DRC and with ADR experts.

Qualitative research gathers large amounts of data to achieve study objectives, interpreting and analyzing through document and thematic analysis. Documentary analysis evaluates digital and print documents for context and understanding. Thematic analysis identifies, analyzes, unifies, describes, and records themes within collected data through epistemologies and research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, data gathered from interviews with experts was analyzed through thematic analysis.

A Critical Overview of Female's Participation in DRCs

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, known for its "Pakhtunwali" code, has a long-standing tradition of conflict resolution through reconciliation. However, the recent spike in militancy and terrorism in this region have shattered this tradition. KPK Police has adopted the Dispute Resolution Council (DRC) approach to revive restorative justice. DRC is a legal forum supported by KP police Act 2017 and is part of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) community, providing mediation, arbitration, and group facilitation options as alternatives to traditional court systems.

The Dispute Resolution Council (DRC) in Pakistan aims to resolve disputes and daily issues outside courts, as per Article 37 of the

Challenges to Female’s Participation in Dispute Resolution

Neelam

Constitution, ensuring affordable and expeditious justice for citizens. (Salma Khattak, personnel communication 2022). DRC is established with a motto of “*Sulah-al-Khair*” and under the vision of “*And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two*”. *Surah Al Hujrat Verse 09*.

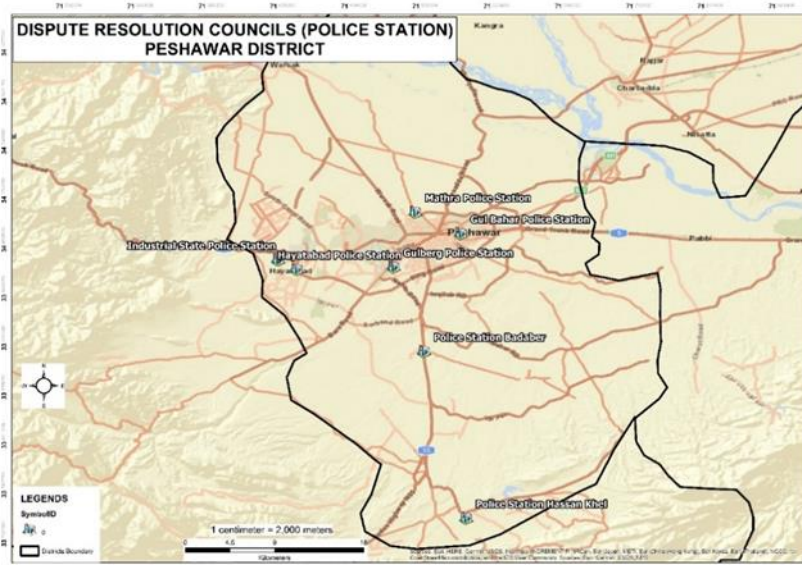


Figure: Dispute Resolution Councils in district Peshawar

DRCs in District Peshawar: A Situational Analysis

This section analyzes the performance of seven Dispute Resolution Councils in Peshawar, analyzing cases received, resolved, referred for legal action, filed, and pending. The councils received 9510 complaints, with 3858 successfully resolved, 763 referred for legal action, and 379 cases remain pending. DRC Gulbahar received the largest number of cases (4866), with 180 pending. DRC Gulbahar, the oldest DRC in Peshawar, has a better case management record than other DRCs. The latest, DRC Hayatabad, was established in June 2021 and received only eight cases till September 2022.

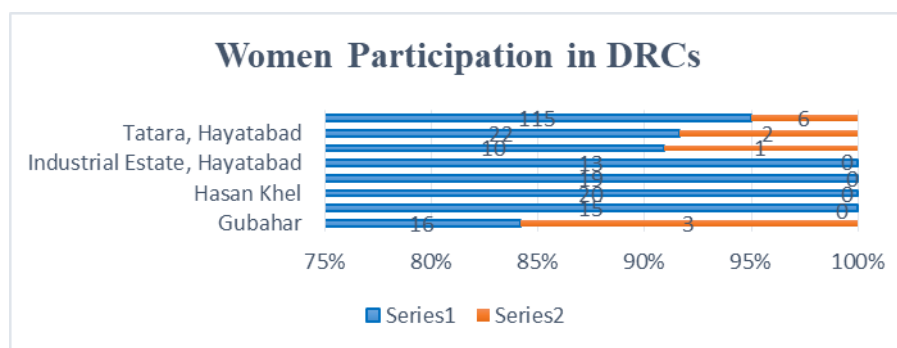
Table: Overall Statistical Data of DRC Cases in District Peshawar

Name of DRC	Time Period	Total Compl aints	Resolved	Legal Action	Filed Cases	Total	Pending Applications
Gulbahar	13.1.2014 to 0.9.2022	4866	2139	568	1979	4686	180
Gulberg	14.5.2014 to 30.9.2023	2898	1014	137	1716	2867	31
Tatara	09.02.2017 to 30.9.2022	378	74	-	272	346	32

Challenges to Female's Participation in Dispute Resolution						Neelum	
Badhber	15.03.2020 to 30.9.2022	654	316	1	256	573	81
Mathra	14.07.2020 to 30.09.2022	521	192	54	235	481	40
Hassan Khel	25.05.2021 to 30.09.2022	185	120	1	49	170	15
Industrial Estate Hayatabad	25.06.2021 to 30.09.2022	8	3	2	3	8	-
Total		9510	3858	763	4510	9131	379

Status of Female Participation in DRCs

Seven Dispute Resolution Councils (DRCs) in Peshawar are located in various police stations, with at least two female members. DRCs are formed akin to the informal Jirga system, but female are more reluctant to participate (Dr. Bilal, Personal communication, September 14, 2022). Female's participation in Dispute Resolution Councils is minimal, with few female members out of total members. The DRC act does not specify



the ratio of female's membership, and discussions and recommendations primarily come from male members (Salma Khattak, Personal Communication, September 10, 2022).

This research study focused on the matter of female's participation in dispute resolution councils. The study found that out of 121 members of the seven (07) DRCs in Peshawar, only 6 female members are part of the dispute resolution councils.

A detailed DRC-wise break-up of the male and female membership is given below:

Figure: Female Participation in Dispute Resolution Councils in District Peshawar

Figure mentioned above, reveals limited female participation in dispute resolution councils in Peshawar, with men dominating leadership positions. Socio-cultural dynamics, limited awareness, and lack of incentives contribute to this issue. However, female members show higher participation in decision-making. The patriarchal setup contributes to this low level of female's involvement (Shagufta gul, Personal communication, October 22, 2022).

Female Empowerment through DRCs: Challenges

Responses Rate

The study involved 40 interviews with female, dispute resolution experts, and council members in District Peshawar, and 50 local females in focus group discussions. A 100% response rate was obtained.

Challenges to Female Empowerment through DRCs

This research study aimed to explore challenges to female's empowerment in dispute resolution councils in District Peshawar. Results showed female mostly access councils for domestic issues, but their participation is limited. Understanding these challenges and potential opportunities for empowerment is crucial.

Less Female Representation

Peshawar's district has a low representation of female members in dispute resolution centers (DRCs), with only one seat reserved for female out of 21 members. Local community elders and DRC members believe female are not motivated to join these councils due to socio-cultural dynamics. This disparity in representation highlights the need for increased representation and support for female members in DRCs (Sana, personal communication, October 12, 2022). The lack of incentives for female DRC membership in Peshawar's councils

Selection Standards for DRC Members:

DRC member selection requirements appear fair, considering regional customs and community consultation. However, the rule requiring mature, experienced, and balanced personalities is ambiguous and needs a concise definition, especially for female members.

Patriarchal Setup

Rural Peshawar society is patriarchal, with female status determined by financial status and men's honor based on ownership (Haeri, 2002). Countries prioritize female's empowerment and development policies, but their representation in dispute resolution mechanisms is low due to patriarchal society, male-dominated DRC membership, and male-dominated police stations. This patriarchal environment limits female participation. In Peshawar, females face challenges in accessing DRCs and disclosing personal issues to male-dominated panels and police officials, despite international commitments and state legislation (Asfandyar, personal communication, October 22, 2022). In patriarchal societies, female is dependent on male family members, unable to make decisions independently.

Socio Cultural Dynamics

Culture encompasses shared values, assumptions, linguistic frameworks, and customs that identify a group collectively. It is crucial in traditional African communities and contributes significantly to social structure. Social order refers to the solidity of society through laws and customs, enabling collaboration and peaceful coexistence. Sociologists analyze both positive and negative aspects of social order (Cole, 2019). Pashtun culture and traditions in Peshawar prohibit females from inheriting lands and properties, promoting marriage and family structure. They also prohibit speaking in front of men, interacting with males at public gatherings, sharing meals, and eating with men in private. Widows are placed into polygamous unions and dispossessed of their ex-husbands' property. These cultural norms restrict female's participation in dispute resolution councils, as they are confined to household responsibilities within their homes. Gender stereotypes divide men and female's assigned duties, with conflict resolution being considered the sole responsibility of men. This societal challenge limits female's participation in dispute resolution councils and community development.

Confidentiality is at risk

Maintaining confidentiality in family-related cases, particularly those involving female members in Pashtun society, is crucial. Disclosure of confidential matters is deeply resented by both male and female members. DRCs, established within police stations, often struggle to maintain secrecy due to limited halls and the presence of members from nearby localities. Female cases, particularly those related to separation, divorce, or domestic violence, are highly sensitive. DRCs lack special arrangements for maintaining confidentiality and data preservation systems, making it difficult to secure the confidential information of any party (Irum, personal communication, October 20, 2022)

Unavailability of Gender-Specific Space/ Area

District Peshawar, the capital and urban center of the province, faces challenges for female in rural areas due to gender roles and responsibilities. The lack of separate rooms for female's privacy and washroom facilities in police stations makes them reluctant to visit DRCs, as local norms and culture do not allow them to access such public places. The lack of these facilities also restricts the participation of female as members in the DRCs as well.

Low Literacy level

Education is crucial for resolving community conflicts in Peshawar, as it empowers female and allows them to participate in decision-making processes. Female with education are more empowered

and can attend meetings and have equal influence. Low levels of education, particularly among female, pose a significant development barrier in developing nations. Low literacy rates among female in rural areas hinder equal participation in communal dispute resolution through councils. Education is crucial for understanding one's rights and access to dispute resolution mechanisms. Female's higher literacy rate in urban areas leads to higher participation in Dispute Resolution Councils. However, low literacy in rural areas results in a lack of awareness about justice rights, leading to female relying on male family members for matters. The lack of education in rural communities also restrains their participation in dispute resolution councils as the key to achieving equality, especially for female, and improving parity for them (Baker, 2011)

Mobility Issues

Female's participation in dispute resolution councils (DRCs) requires accomplishments to address developmental issues and policymaking. Feminine mobility is a barrier in rural Peshawar, where socio-cultural values control the population and female are often accompanied by male family members. Additionally, female with special needs face difficulties in accessing DRCs due to their lack of accessibility (Ayesha Tariq, personal communication, August 10, 2022). State officials have not given much priority to such issues and are unable to provide access to people with special needs. Such access issues also have a bearing on restricting the participation of female members in DRC panels. The reason is that no matter how qualified, experienced and enthusiastic they may be to participate as members in these panels, their mobility issues often prove a hindrance to render their services.

Lack of Awareness about DRC

Female face challenges in participating in dispute resolution mechanisms due to limited awareness and limited facilities, particularly in rural areas. Mass media, education, and interaction with local communities contribute to this issue.

Gender Discrimination

Gender perspective in traditional society in Peshawar views duties and activities as male-only, promoting unjust participation of female in dispute resolution mechanisms, perpetuating gender inequality. The view of participants in the female's FGD (12/8/2022) was that,

"These long-standing traditional practices have, in turn, caused female to be excluded from important decision-making processes in the community, leading to a lack of representation and participation in these processes. This has made it almost impossible for female to make their voices heard in the community, leading to a lack of female representation

in the decision-making processes. "Such traditional practices have deeply ingrained in the minds of many females that they should remain in a subordinate position when it comes to men."

"This is a symptom of the patriarchal society in which we live, where gender roles are entrenched and female feel that their voices do not count" (Nazia, Personal communication, October 15, 2022). This has created the perception that female is not capable of managing such situations, and even if they have the skills, they will still remain in the background while men take the lead. Female participation in dispute resolution remains challenging in developing societies, with gender discrimination limiting female's participation. In the rural parts of the district, female is deprived of their right to access dispute resolution on the basis of gender bias, where they are limited to household chaos. In terms of participation, very few females are part of Dispute Resolution Councils. They don't get enough opportunities to represent female on the panel. Out of 21 members, only one seat is reserved for female, who are supposed to represent almost half of the population of the community.

Economic Dependency

Historical reliance on men in patriarchal societies leads to economic challenges, limiting female's participation in dispute resolution councils. Economic stability is crucial for female's empowerment, as they need financing to cover travel expenses and participate in DRCs. Traditional societies in Peshawar often limit female's involvement in peacemaking initiatives and lack of financial incentives makes it difficult for female to participate in decision-making processes.

Administrative Issues

Female's participation in dispute resolution councils is hindered by administrative facilities, limited awareness, congested areas, unavailability of separate rooms, and transportation issues, affecting the system's effectiveness (Nawab Khalid, personal communication, October 22, 2022).

Recommendations of the Study

This research explores alternate dispute resolution mechanisms, establishing Dispute Resolution Councils in KP, female's participation, and existing barriers in District Peshawar. Key recommendations include addressing these issues.

Trust building in the Communities

To improve the effectiveness of dispute resolution councils, build community trust by selecting reputable and impartial female members, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring an efficient working

mechanism.

More Female in Leadership Position

Gender inclusion in dispute resolution councils is crucial for empowerment globally and in Pakistan. However, female representation in DRCs is low, with only six members in Peshawar. To motivate female, it is essential to contact retired female officers, local government representatives, law practitioners, social activists, and community elders to raise awareness about female's participation in DRCs. Separate areas for DRCs should be provided to ensure females can participate as members in these councils.

Improved Selection Standards for Eligibility

The DRC member selection requirements should be simplified and consider regional customs, involving local community consultation. The rule requiring mature, experienced, and balanced personalities is ambiguous and should be simplified. A fixed quota for females is necessary for convenience as well as for avoiding the general perception that DRC is solely for males.

Gender inclusive arrangements

Female's representation in dispute resolution mechanisms is low due to patriarchy, and fear of going to the police station, In Peshawar, female are dominated by men, making it difficult for them to make decisions independently. To address this issue, it is crucial to create gender-friendly and inclusive arrangements at DRCs, allowing female members to join forums and discharge responsibilities,

Community Sensitization and Mobilization

Cultural norms and Pashtun traditional codes hinder female's participation in dispute resolution councils (DRCs). Gender stereotypes divide men and female's duties, making conflict resolution solely a male's domain. Community sensitization and mobilization are needed to promote female's involvement in DRCs. NGOs like Rahbar and Rozan are working to raise awareness, while the police department should play a role in changing community attitudes. Higher secondary schools and colleges should also focus on raising awareness and mobilizing communities.

Availability of Gender Friendly Spaces and Mechanism

Peshawar, the capital and urban center of the province, faces challenges for female in rural areas due to gender roles and responsibilities. The offices and premises for dispute resolution councils lack separate rooms for female's privacy and washroom facilities. To improve female's participation, gender-friendly spaces and mechanisms should be provided, including separate setting areas and separate female police officials to handle cases.

Increased Educational level

Education is crucial for addressing community conflicts in Peshawar, as it empowers female and allows them to participate in decision-making processes. The female population in urban areas is more educated, leading to higher participation in dispute resolution councils. However, low literacy in rural areas results in a lack of awareness about justice rights, limiting female's participation in these councils. The state should prioritize free and compulsory education for female, especially in rural areas with low literacy ratios.

Comprehensive Program on Civic Education

In Peshawar, female face challenges in accessing civic rights, including access to justice and participation in dispute resolution councils. Structural impediments hinder female's rights. Legal socialization is needed, and NGOs, police, and female rights entities should organize civic education programs to raise awareness and mobilize female in case of violations. This program should reduce harmful socio-cultural impacts on female participation in DRCs and contribute to gender inclusion in dispute resolution mechanisms.

Capacity Building of the Members

The technical capacity of panel members is crucial for effective dispute resolution mechanisms and justice provision. However, DRCs lack institutional facilitation to develop these skills. A study found that DRC members in Peshawar were poorly trained in legal matters. Focusing on capacity-building, training on various dispute resolution mechanisms, rules, and basic laws will enhance the council's effectiveness and facilitate legal-based decisions. Provision of such capacity building opportunities may encourage more and more female members to join DRC forums as members.

Provision of Honorarium

Historical reliance on men creates economic challenges for female in dispute resolution councils. Financial assistance, such as honorariums and daily allowances, is crucial for female's participation. Lack of such incentives discourages female from participating. Financial assistance can motivate and reduce barriers to participation.

Effective Participation (role of media, Ngo etc.)

State authorities, media, and non-governmental organizations should collaborate to increase female's involvement and participation in dispute resolution councils in Peshawar. This will improve community perception and promote female as agents of change.

Female as a Pressure Group

There is a critical need for female participants to work together to ensure that female have effective participation in conflict resolution bodies. If they all make a concerted effort for the advancement of female in society, they can only truly solve the difficulties facing female. Because of this, female must band together to exert pressure on society in order to achieve their objectives.

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Challenges to Female's Participation in Dispute Resolution **Neelam**

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