

## INFLUENCE OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS ON PAKISTAN'S DEATH PENALTY POLICIES: BALANCING SOVEREIGNTY AND GLOBAL NORMS

**Muhammad Sajid Khan**

Ph.D. Law Scholar, Times Institute Multan.

Email: pathancj131@gmail.com

ORCID: 0009-0003-5844-3787

**Dr. Shaukat Hussain Bhatti**

(Corresponding Author)

Associate Professor

Times Institute Multan

Email:shaukathussain78682@gmail.com

### Abstract

*The death penalty is a controversial issue in Pakistan and can be considered as a vital issue for the country's legislation, culture, and politics. While Pakistan has tried to conform to the laws of human rights in the international realm, the country continues to struggle in reproducing it fully. The legal structure in Pakistan for the death penalty has been firmly entrenched with the help of nationalistic, religious and political reasoning. However, organizations and Conventions of human rights of the world including International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) should ban or limit the implementation of death penalty particularly on juvenile and mentally challenged persons. The existing state of the death penalty in Pakistan has been studied by interviewing several legal authorities, human rights activists, and other insiders of the legal system. The implications are that there are legal, religious, and cultural concerns that favor and those that do not favor capital punishment as it holds in Pakistan. As this work has demonstrated, a number of improvements have been made in recent years. For example, the practice of executing juvenile offenders is no longer permitted. The conclusion stresses on the fact that Pakistan needs change that legal policy and attitudes regarding capital punishment in order to be in sync with the human rights.*

### Introduction

Death penalty is still a controversy in Pakistan because many international human rights organizations has an influence on formulation of the policies of Pakistan especially death penalty (Khan, 2021). Currently displayed as a retentionist state, Pakistan uses capital punishment referring to sovereignty, traditions of legal systems, and security of people. However, international human rights legislations require the abolishment of the death penalty or the putting of a freeze on the implementation of the same as it is inhumane or against the rights of every person to life (Kanwel et al., 2024). The situation best exemplifies a much-discussed conflict between Pakistani government and human rights agreements ratified by the country. Many global human rights organizations includes Amnesty international, Human Rights Watch, United Nations Human Rights council exercises and oversight the use of death penalty in Pakistan and lobbying for change of law that reflects global policies on death penalty. These organizations record use of force on human rights, for change and participate in diplomatic discussions (Khan, 2021). However, Pakistan has persisted on death penalty laws, which further signify that there are thousands of prisoners awaiting the death penalty. The state has provided certain religious, legal, and security reasons for such intervention as capital punishment is needed to punish severe crimes such as terrorism and blasphemy (Al-Qamar et al., 2023). The aim of the paper is to analyse influence of International Human Rights Organizations on Pakistan's death penalty policies. The objectives includes, to analyse

influence of international human rights advocacy on judicial stance and Pakistan legislative stance on death penalty, to assess extent to which Pakistan align the policies of death penalty with international human rights standards., and to explore resistance and challenges in implementation of international human rights on death penalty in Pakistan.

### Literature Review

#### **The Role of International Human Rights Organizations in Death Penalty**

The international community through human rights NGOs has for several years campaigned against the death penalty claiming that it is inhumane (Pascoe & Bae, 2020). Khan (2021) mentioned that the organizations that are most active in this matter are Amnesty International which is one of the leading organizations in this regard and publishes annual reports on subjects like death penalty in Pakistan and other countries, and works towards having the death penalty abolished. Azam and Airout (2024) highlighted that the comprehensive role of United Nations is also emphasized through some specific resolutions for halting on the executions of death penalty by member states. The UN General Assembly resolution on the moratorium on the use of the death penalty in 2007 can be viewed as a great achievement in the process of its abolition (Pascoe & Bae, 2020). Nevertheless, retentionist states, such as Pakistan, has time and again voted against such resolutions making references to the sovereignty as well as legal systems (Azam & Airout, 2024).

The ambiguity about the correspondences between Pakistan's domestic and international legal principles, mainly the country's limited compliance with the global norms and standards for human rights that it has signed, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (Butt, 2024). Death penalty in Pakistan is allowed for several crimes such as terrorism, murder, rape and blasphemy According to the constitution. The country had de facto imposed moratorium on the death penalty since 2008 but resumed it in 2014 after the terrifying Peshawar school attack by the Taliban (Human Rights Watch, 2014). After that more than hundred people have been executed, and those have been done despite the ban from the international community. As for the justification of capital punishment, legal provisions are still traced under the Pakistan Penal Code and the Anti-Terrorism Act (Human Rights Watch, 2014). The role of sovereignty is quite significant in deciding on the issue of the death penalty in Pakistan. One of the common political clichés is that international pressure hampers the governments in maintaining the national laws due to the cultural and religious difference and security threats.

#### **The Influence of International Standards on Pakistan's Death Penalty Reforms**

International advocacy has brought some changes; though the country has not legalized the abolition (Butt, 2024). In 2008, Pakistan imposed a de facto ban on executions due to international pressure, and it was in force up to 2014 (Human Rights Watch, 2014). In the same manner, reaction from human rights groups have brought the following noteworthy change in the judicial opinion of Pakistan in 2021 to declare that mentally ill prisoners cannot be executed. Khan (2021) mentioned that such centres have also received support from international organizations on the domestic level. The Justice Project Pakistan is a local non-governmental organization providing legal assistance to the death row inmates as well as combating wrongful convictions with help of international organization. This data provides concrete evidence of Pakistan's current death penalty policies in action. It shows how many people are on death row, potentially revealing patterns in sentencing, demographics of those sentenced, and the types of crimes that lead to capital punishment. By examining trends in

this data over time, we can potentially see how international pressure from human rights organizations has influenced Pakistan's policies. For example, number of death sentences, executions, or overall prisoner demographics (see figure 1). This data is essential for human rights organizations to advocate for reforms in Pakistan's death penalty policies. It provides them with the evidence needed to demonstrate the scale of the issue and the need for change. By incorporating this data into your research, one can provide a more comprehensive and impactful analysis of the influence of international human rights organizations on Pakistan's death penalty policies.

Sr. No.	Name of Jail	UCCP	CP	Total No. of Prisoners
1	Central Jail, Lahore	152	27	179
2	Central Jail, Gujranwala	85	18	103
3	District Jail, Kasur	56	5	61
4	District Jail, Lahore	0	0	0
5	District Jail, Sheikhpura	122	6	128
6	District Jail, Sialkot	48	5	53
7	District Jail, Narowal	31	3	34
8	District Jail, Hafizabad	39	2	41
9	Central Jail, Sahiwal	74	8	82
10	HSP Sahiwal	19	46	65
11	District Jail, Okara	56	1	57
12	District Jail, Pakpattan	40	1	41
13	Central Jail, Rawalpindi	175	55	230
14	District Jail, Attock	42	5	47
15	District Jail, Gujrat	1	0	1
16	District Jail, Jhelum	61	8	69
17	District Jail, MBDin	36	3	39
18	Sub Jail, Chakwal	0	0	0
19	Central Jail Faisalabad	218	16	234
20	BI & J Jail Faisalabad	0	0	0
21	District Jail Faisalabad	0	0	0
22	District Jail Jhang	86	5	91
23	District Jail Toba Tek Singh	62	4	66
24	Central Jail Mianwali	5	0	5
25	District Jail Sargodha	110	7	117
26	District Jail Shahpur	116	3	119
27	District Jail, Bhakkar	35	0	35
28	HSP Mianwali	49	12	61
29	Central Jail, Multan	232	12	244
30	District Jail, Multan	0	0	0
31	District Jail, Khanewal	0	0	0

32	District Jail, Vehari	49	3	52
33	Women Jail, Multan	5	0	5
34	Sub Jail, Shujabad	0	0	0
35	BI & J Jail, Bahawalpur	0	0	0
36	Central Jail, Bahawalpur	87	13	100
37	District Jail, RYKhan	26	0	26
38	District Jail, Lodhran	20	3	23
39	District Jail, BNagar	0	0	0
40	Central Jail, DG Khan	33	1	34
41	District Jail, Muzaffargarh	0	0	0
42	District Jail, Rajanpur	49	1	50
43	District Jail, Layyah	25	1	26
<b>Total</b>		<b>2244</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>2518</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>				

*Figure 1: Evidence of Pakistan's current death penalty policies in action*

### Methodology

This research utilises a qualitative research design to examine the influence of international human rights organizations on Pakistan's death penalty policies. This approach of research is best applied where the topic being examined involves relation with social or political system because it entails especially handling of people's perception (Muzari et al., 2022). The findings of this research will be based upon primary data gathered from individuals who have first-hand practical experience and knowledge of human rights advocacy and legal systems in Pakistan in order to gain a richer understanding of how global human rights norms interact with the concept of national sovereignty of the country under analysis (de Villiers et al., 2021). On this basis, the present research chooses the interpretivist research philosophy that mainly focuses on the subjects' perceptions of events and phenomena in their environment and mine. Interpretivism is appropriate for this research since it recognises that there are several stakeholders who influence policy on the death penalty such as the international organizations, governments, lawyers, and activists.

The data for this study is gathered through semi-structured interviews carried out in a semi-structured format on ten participants. The participants include human right activists and volunteers, legal professionals, policymakers involved and international human rights organizations (Abbas et al., 2023). The choice of these participants allows for obtaining both the initiatives of international organizations on the issue and the reaction of Pakistani officials and lawyers. Semi-structured interviews are chosen for the purpose of the study as they permit the participants to find an intermediate ground between receiving a structured set of questions and providing free responses based on the question asked. The interview is conducted on the basis of research objectives drafted. The research is coursed in an effort to harmonize Pakistani laws with international human rights standards (Abbas et al., 2023). Further it discusses the influence of international standards in the determination of the controversy of death penalty in Pakistan. The interview is conducted online interview depending on the availability of the participant. These take between 45 to 60 minutes including the participants' permission to record their interview to enhance the reliability of

the transcription and analysis of data. The collected data from interviews is then subjected to use thematic analysis which is a qualitative analysing technique that involves analysing and categorizing patterns in the data.

### Results

The thematic coding table is designed on the basis of participant's responses on the questions asked during the interview. The coding table is provided below:

#### Thematic Coding Table

Themes	Codes
Theme 1: International human rights advocacy on judicial stance and Pakistan legislative stance on death penalty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International influence and judicial sovereignty.</li> <li>• Legislative resistance to human rights.</li> <li>• Capital punishment and public opinion.</li> </ul>
Theme 2: Alignment of Pakistan's policies of death penalty with international human rights standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal reforms and compliance with human rights.</li> <li>• Weak legal system and corruption.</li> <li>• Implementation challenges of reforms.</li> </ul>
Theme 3: Resistance and challenges in implementation of international human rights on death penalty in Pakistan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resistance from legal, religious and political authorities.</li> <li>• Religious justification for death penalty.</li> <li>• Sovereignty in policy making.</li> <li>• Judiciary and legal system challenges.</li> </ul>

Table 1: Thematic Coding Table

#### 1. International human rights advocacy on judicial stance and Pakistan legislative stance on death penalty

In Pakistan the government have worked hard in placing pressure on courts to conform to the human rights standards where the country has committed to, especially relating to fair trial provisions, juvenile systems and mentally ill suspects (Baig et al., 2024). Azam and Airout (2024) mentioned that non-governmental organizations that focus on human rights play a role in shaping the process of dealing with the cases involving the death penalty in certain countries. Some of the Pakistani courts have relied on international conventions while addressing the appeals relating to death penalty. Participant 3 observed that,

*"The Supreme Court has occasionally referred to international human rights norms especially in cases of mentally ill inmates or those that were convicted as juveniles. Nevertheless, these references hardly lead to legislative changes as parliamentarians fail to act with the same conviction."*

This argument can be supported by judicial decisions concerning the international human rights with regard to refugees. For example, the recent judgment of the year 2021 that made it unlawful to execute mentally ill prisoners was instigated by advocates of human rights (Hashim, 2021). Jan and Malik (2022) such principles have not been integrated into general legislations of parliament. This is so because some legislators maintain that judicial matters should not be interrelated with legislative sovereignty; that outside forces should not



influence internal laws of a country. Kanwel et al. (2024) argue that such principles are being imposed externally owing to its interaction with abroad and are not something that is fall under legal responsibility of a state and human rights.

Despite a certain degree of use of human rights discourse by the courts, Pakistani legislation continues to be uncompromising in its support of the death penalty. It is pertinent to understand that lawmakers across the world are hesitant to embrace external advocacy, having national sovereignty and public opinion as their major anchors. Participant 7 said,

*“Advocates of the moratorium have been called for by international human rights groups, however, legislators have it in their understanding that such interferences compromise the sovereignty of Pakistan’s judiciary and the Islamic sharia law.”*

The proponents of legislative rebellion contend that Pakistan follows the Islamic law in terms of legal framework which embraces capital punishment in some conditions (Javed & Kareem, 2020). Khan (2021) say that international organizations do not ‘take into account the socio-cultural and religious context of Pakistan in the formulation of its legal policies. Also, it is said that capital punishment reduces the rates of violent crimes, but any changes in this policy cannot be made by PRC under international pressure (Javed & Kareem, 2020). Nevertheless, Khan (2021) mentioned that human rights activists state that the death penalty under invalid procedural legal means leads to justice miscarriages, especially in a country where such a possibility is quite real. International NGOs stress that the doctrine of fair trial protections provided for by the ICCPR should be complied with not to let executions be carried out due to due process violations such as inept counsel and forced confessions. Although Pakistan has however acceded to the ICCPR the latter seems to be reluctant in its application making the debate on legislative resistance justified.

In addition to the judges and legislative political of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, public opinion demands or approves capital punishment. There are two schools of thought in this subject, where many political leaders argue that it is justified by the fact that it represents opinion and preserves order. For instance, participant 10 thus referred,

*“It will be recalled that people of Pakistan have always supported the death penalty and this is why, policymakers negate the demands by international organizations on ceszation or reduction of the death penalty.”*

The policy makers’ focus on the will of the people, no to foreign interferences when it comes to capital punishments (Khan, 2021). On the same note, Sadiq (2023) other factors such as the need to protect the country from acts of terrorism especially after the occurrence of terrible incidents has acted as a driving force for the government’s support to capital punishment. For example, Pakistan resumed death penalty after the year 2014 Army Public School attack, and PML-N government put an end to six-year moratorium on executions on ground of strengthening the ‘Rule of Law’ demanding stricter penalties for terrorism (BBC, 2015; Haider, 2014).

Hence as the theme has analysed the examination of international human rights has impacted upon the judiciary in certain occasions; the legislative branch of Pakistan continues to oppose same mainly due to sovereignty, religiosity and populism. There has also been a limited use of international human rights norms in judgements especially where they involve vulnerable persons thus no legislative reform adoption process. Whenever we speak of human rights, parliamentarians insist that it is foreign interferences to impose its resolutions on the nations. In addition, there are a lot of political and public reasons why the death penalty is still being practiced today – which further explains why there is little political will to reform or abolish this kind of punishment.

## 2. Alignment of Pakistan's policies of death penalty with international human rights standards

Pakistani government's decision to harmonize its stance on the death penalty with that of the international human rights continues to be a contentious issue. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the United Nations among other rights body have always called on Pakistan to either reduce the number of capital offense or abolish the death penalty all together (Noor & Ajmal, 2022). Pakistan is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as well as the Convention Against Torture (CAT), however, the Pakistani legal system is yet to rubber-stamp on the key provisions of both the treaties (Islam et al., 2022). This theme seeks to establish if Pakistan has adopted any measure toward compliance of its policies with universally acceptable standards in human rights with concentration on legislative measures, juristic definitions, and the issues of compliance. Some participants acknowledged the fact that Pakistan has done something to address international human rights norms but argued that this measure is still in process. Other changes in laws, for instance the banning of juvenile and mentally ill person executions indicate some form of compliance with international treaties. Participant 3's response was:

*"Generally, Pakistan has taken certain steps in the direction of the reform of the death penalty in compliance with the international human rights, where limits have been put on the execution of juvenile and mentally ill prisoners however, these changes are not comprehensive and are often not implemented."*

This statement also gives a record on how Pakistan has adopted new laws that has been pressured by the international community. Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (2000) mentioned that the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance (JJSO) of 2000 specifically bans the execution of juvenile persons while in the recent year 2021 the Supreme Court has declared that persons suffering from mental illness cannot be executed. These measures are in harmony with the global human rights standards and suggest the desire to changes the system.

Thus, human rights organizations claim that enforcement is not consistent (Noor & Ajmal, 2022). This is well illustrated in that there have been deaths where those involved were pronounced guilty of the accusations levelled on them since they failed to provide birth certificate to prove their ages. This means that although, Pakistan has made legal reforms, there are still problems in their implementation that weaken their results. Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (2000) mentioned that this makes the country's adherence to the international human rights inadequate for lack of strict measures on ascertaining the age and mental status of the vulnerable people.

Another factor is the weak implementation on legal and institutional reforms among the parties that have signed international agreements. Lack of supervision in the courts, financial constraints, and institutionalized bribery all play a role in the lack of enforcement of human rights for those receiving the death penalty. Participant 7 averred:

*"When Pakistan does sign human right treaties it does not undergo legal reforms that can be regarded as significant."*

Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (2000) agree with the statement that justice system is still defective; many inmates are not afforded proper justice. There are substantiation from the reports by human rights organization; for instance, forced confessions, poor legal counsel and long detention of individuals on death row. Nevertheless, Pakistan, which is a state party to ICCPR has been applying death penalty under a system that is rife with due process abuse. On the contrary, Noor and Ajmal (2022) mentioned that some legal authorities can point changes that have taken place in the judicial branch of Pakistan toward the consideration of

human rights violations. For example, the Supreme Court has recently become involved with matters whenever a procedural irregularity, or an unfair trial has taken place. Nonetheless, these have remained isolated and more or less dependent on case law as opposed to legal changes.

The third view is political and religious decide the Pakistani policy in relation to punishment. Some officials fail to embrace reforms because it will make them unpopular when implementing policies. Participant 10 said,

*“This will be difficult to do because the death penalty is entrenched in Pakistan’s law and culture based on religion. Many people regard it as justice, which is important to consider this action as a necessary form.”*

This statement sheds the light on an overall view of opposing reform of capital punishment regulations. Javed and Kareem (2020) added that the Sharia law, a considerable part of the Pakistan legal system, allows for capital punishment for some of the crimes such as murder and blasphemy. Thus, no attempts to westernize Pakistan and bring its legislation in compliance with human rights norms is possible due to criticism from religious leaders and conservative politicians. However, other authors like Noor and Ajmal (2022) and Sadiq (2023) claim that justice and fair trial are also enshrined in Islamic law system and thus the Islamic law might offer backing to the reforms that meet the internationally acknowledged human rights standards. Both Morocco and Tunisia are other model Islamic countries which apply Islamic law and which have recently experienced definite advances on the gradual abolition of the death penalty. This is an indication that religious and human rights’ notion do not always have to part ways.

The theme concludes that although Pakistan has made some legal reforms regarding the death penalty in accordance with human rights international laws, full compliance is still a difficult task. The country has adopted some measures to control capital punishment for instance, juveniles and mentally ill prisoners, but the implementation of this gesture is very poor. Corruption and weak judiciary system are major factors that hinder the actual implementation of reforms.

### **3. Resistance and challenges in implementation of international human rights on death penalty in Pakistan.**

Challenges and resistance to the promotion and protection of international human rights ideals on the death penalty in Pakistan include policymakers, conservatives, religious groups and employees of the legal system (Hoyle, 2023). Ali (2023) added that the Pakistan authorities ratified many international treatise like International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), but they faced legal cultural and political barriers to harmonise domestic laws with these international treaties. This theme elaborates on the different challenges of implementation such as legislative challenge, religious and societal challenge, and lack of judicial support.

One of the key issues in putting into practice international norm of human rights in Pakistan is that patriotism opposes foreign interfering (Ali, 2023). A common opinion among policy makers has been made that Pakistan should be allowed to handle its domestic affairs without external intervention from any international organization. Participant 2 asserted,

*“Due to this impression, the results show that reform through mere introduction of human rights based laws are a problem in Pakistan because these lawmakers hesitant to bring the major legal adjustment.”*

The above perspective in line with the nationalism sentiments of the leaders of Pakistan where sovereignty is key in decision making on policies (Ali, 2023). Baig et al. (2024)



articulate that international organizations advocate for the eradication of their country's laws and customs that do not fit their agendas. Consequently, Azam and Airout (2024) mentioned that there are attempts to prevent or reduce the use of the death penalty being countered by political arguments that are couched as sovereign issues not violations of human rights.

An analysis of religious and associated social cultures indicates that they are fundamental to explain the Pakistani stance on capital punishment. Several religious scholars and conservative organizations still uphold the fact that the death penalties are authorized in Shari'ah and should not be measured against the international human rights. Participant 6 said this,

*"This was not only an issue of law but of faith for many people in Pakistan. This is why any effort to regulate or even remove it is considered as an erosion of Islamic values."*

The perception of the treatment of death penalty laid down in this viewpoint indicates a vehement disapproval of altering the capital punishment statutes (Azam & Airout, 2024). Javed and Kareem (2020) mentioned that the Pakistani people strongly support the death penalty for serious offenses including murder and blasphemy since the Sharia law of Islam permits it. For this reason, any attempt to curb the use of the death penalty is subjected to a lot of criticism from the religious factions as it goes against the teaching of the Sharia law.

In contrast, Javed and Kareem (2020) added that legal experts and moderate Islamists argue that Islamic law means justice, mercy and fair trial and therefore can be used to address the concerns in the socio-legal treatment of death penalty. However, Abou El Fadl (2017) added that some Muslim-majority countries like Morocco and Tunisia pays lip service in prohibiting the death penalty but retain their Shari'ah law. These examples show that religion and human rights do not necessarily oppose each other but the problem is in mentality of people.

However, political and religious opposition is not the only obstacle in Pakistan for the human right based reforms there are certain structural problems in judicial and institutional structures of Pakistan. Due to poor legislation, corruption and inadequate judiciary systems fairness in trials and defendant's rights are hard to be provided in death penalty cases. Participant 9 mentioned,

*"Though there are such reforms going through legal requirements and some laws are changed our judiciary as well as our law enforcing agencies often decline to enforce such changes smoothly because of corruption and inefficiency."*

Such a statement is quite revealing of the thematic difference between the law on the one hand, and its application on the other (Abou El Fadl, 2017). According to the organizations that monitor human rights, many inmates who are on death penalty in Pakistan do not get fair trials, and trials are characterized by forced confessions; failure to get a lawyer; and weak evidence. Al-Qamar et al. (2023) mentioned that such laws are not implemented due to weaknesses in institutions of the nation despite the pressures exerted by International Convention.

Nevertheless, there are critics who believe that however slowly, there are signs that the judiciary is moving in the right direction (Azam & Airout, 2024). A growing consciousness of fair trial standards is amply discernible from the fact that Pakistan's Supreme Court has set aside death penalties on different occasions because of a defective procedure. Nonetheless, Ali (2023) mentioned that these cases can be comprehended as exceptions rather than the rule which gives evidence about the need for amendments in relation to institutional factors that impede the application of the provisions of human rights.

The theme concludes that implementation of international human rights standard on death penalty in Pakistan is further restricted by refinements coming from many other sources. Politicians are sceptical of changes primarily because of their indigenous sovereignty, or they

deem any interventions based on human rights as interference from other countries. Another challenge is that religious and social beliefs come into play in the support for capital punishment as it is considered part of the Islamic justice system. Moreover, there is also lack of structures in the judiciary and the law enforcement agencies to ensure civil liberties and fair trial of the suspects.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the issue of the death penalty in Pakistan is a complex and highly sensitive issue that continues to pose a challenge given its stance on this issue in light of human rights norms set by the international community. Pakistan has attempted to ensure compliance with the ICCPR as well as the Crimes Against Torture (CAT), but it still faces numerous challenges at both the legal and organizational levels.

The government of Pakistan has done substantial improvements on matters of legal reforms also Pakistan has banned the juvenile and mentally ill persons from execution showing some concern to international standards. Nevertheless, these have been done sporadically and sometimes the change is just on the surface since implementation has not been forceful enough. The enforcement of these laws is continues to remain weak because of systematic factors that include institutional influence, lack of court supervision and also absence of constitutionalism, in the system of rule of law in the Pakistan. In this the decision-makers while occasionally referring to international human rights in specific cases have not fundamentally transformed the Pakistani legal structure. This is in a way contradictory with judicial activism while on the other end, legislative apathy continues to hinder real policy changes.

There are some of the reasons for the rather reluctance to embrace almost all the fundamental changes to the international standards of human rights regarding the death penalty. The first reason can therefore be attributed to national sovereignty. The conservative Pakistani legislators and politician try to draw on the fact international human rights organizations undermine the state's authority to rule the country in accordance with local laws and native culture included in the sharia legal system that permits death penalty in some situations. This nationalism is religious in nature given the practice of part of the Pakistani laws as the Sharia laws. The leaders of religious institutions and conservatives claimed that capital punishment is a part of Sharia laws hence making it hard to advance for the changes without meeting resistance from those in the religious capacity. This is made worse still by the fact that opinion within Pakistan is highly in favor of the death penalty believing it to be a unique way of preventing crimes as well as a tool for preserving public order.

However, political and public support for death penalty in Pakistan has also been very strong due to events like Army Public School attacked on 2014 that forced the Pakistan government to resume the executions after six years pause. This new policy change can be explained within the political context of Pakistan which has been pressured by security threats most especially the fight against terrorism that has led the government to strengthen the punitive measures such as capital punishment. Such measures are presented as a way to maintain national security and defense of the country's principles of legal rationality, which can be supported by a significant portion of Pakistani citizens.

Nevertheless, there are times when human rights concern has been taken into consideration especially when ascertaining a judgment concerning vulnerable persons for instance juvenile or the mentally ill. Nevertheless, such cases are more the exception rather than the rule and the fundamental legal and institutional setup is still the proving ground where change is reluctant to occur. This way, no mechanisms to support the implementation of liberal changes

are adequately incorporated into practice, and corruption in the judicial and law enforcement systems hinders the effectiveness of the adopted legislation.

In conclusion, it may be said that although there has been certain positive development since the past that point towards the progressive compliance of Pakistan to the international human rights standard in regards to death penalty practices there are still some hurdles that needs to be crossed. These are political, religious, and public resistance and institutional deficits that work against the proper implementation of human rights protection. Thus, for any positive change to happen in the country, a broad strategy must be adopted, which would incorporate not only the legal reforms but also the existing vision of carrying out death penalty in the country. Unless the requirements of the two above-stated rights are fully complied with, the death penalty in Pakistan will remain a debated practice, and it would still pose inconsistencies of the Pakistani laws, norms, and practices with the state's human rights commitments.

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